DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 273 250 IR 012 250

AUTHOR	Castro, Angela S.; And Others
TITLE	An Australian Casebook of Study Centres in Distance Education. Deakin Open Education Monographs No.1.
INSTITUTION	Deakin Univ., Victoria (Australia).
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-7300-0213-6
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	139p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; Computer Managed Instruction; *Cost Effectiveness; *Distance Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Networks; Off Campus Facilities; Shared Facilities; *Study Centers; *Telecommunications; *Universities
IDENTIFIERS	Australia; Kangaroo Network (Australia); Karmel Report; *Support Services

ABSTRACT

A discussion of contemporary issues in Australian study centers for distance education students introduces six case studies which show how some institutions in Australia have endeavored to set up study centers or "borrow" existing local facilities to provide a measure of support for their students. Attempts to set up a telecommunications network at some centers for staff and student interaction are also described, as well as approaches which stress more direct interaction between teaching staff and students. There are two emerging patterns in the provision of study center facilities: (1) the willingness and effort of some institutions to pool resources or to share with others, and (2) the increasing difficulty of funding study centers. An abstract is provided for each of the studies, and a selected, annotated bibliography lists materials on study centers and their functions, and on applications of new technology in student support. (DJR)

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An Australian Casebook of Study Centres in Distance Education

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Kevin T. Livingston
Paul H. Northcott

Deakin Open Education Monographs No. 1

ISBN 0 7300 0213 6
ISSN 0815 5321

Published and distributed by
The Distance Education Unit,
Deakin University,
Victoria 3217

© Deakin University
First published 1985

Australian National Library
Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

An Australian casebook of study centres in distance education.

Bibliography.
ISBN 0 7300 0213 6.

1. Distance education - Australia. 2. Education, Higher - Australia. I. Castro, Angela, 1938- . II. Livingston, Kevin, 1940- . III. Northcott, P.H. (Paul Henry), 1931- . IV. Deakin University. Distance Education Unit. (Series: Deakin open education monographs; 1).

378'.03'0994

Designed by Christina Tsernjavski

Contents

Preface		1
Australian study centres: some contemporary issues		2
Chapter 1	Queensland	12
	Study centres of the University of Queensland (Mavis Kelly)	
	Study centre network of the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (Judy Timmins)	29
Chapter 2	Victoria	36
	Past development and an emerging possible future for Victorian distance education (Peter Smith, Brian Scorgie and David Edge)	
Chapter 3	Northern Territory	48
	The educational brokering role of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre (Kevin T. Livingston)	
Chapter 4	Tasmania	65
	A Tasmanian case study (Chris Carstens and David Kember)	
Chapter 5	Western Australia	80
	The Western Australian connections (John R. Walsh)	
	Student support operations at Murdoch University and some personal reflections (Michael Campion)	87
Chapter 6	South Australia	99
	A South Australian perspective on student support (Bruce King and Anne Forster)	
A selective bibliography on study centres and their functions, and on applications of new technology in student support (Keith Harry)		113
The contributors		131

Preface

In the last quarter of 1984, a group of distance educators from post-secondary institutions around Australia held a series of weekly seminars via the American satellite ATS-1 on the use of study centres for student support. They did so during the Tertiary Distance Education teleconferencing sessions on the Australian KANGAROO-PEACESAT Satellite Network.

Some of these participants later redrafted and expanded their discussion papers to form the chapters of this book. There were a couple of papers which attempted to assess the impact of new communications technologies on study centres in a more detailed way, but we decided (rather reluctantly) to leave them out of the present book. It is our plan to include them in a second monograph of this Deakin series planned for early 1986. The theme of this second book will be the use of new communication technologies in open education, and we hope to include some reports on tertiary institutional plans for telecommunications networking both before and after AUSSAT, Australia's own domestic satellite, is launched in August this year.

Contributors to this book have had to work under some difficulties after the demise of ATS-1 for Australian centres in March deprived them of a useful communications medium. There were additional problems caused by distance. Three of the contributors went on overseas study leave. Mavis Kelly and Michael Campion were away for a good part of this year and Paul Northcott was a consultant at the Open University in Britain from February to the end of July. Paul continued to work on some of the chapters sent to him and was able to draw on the expertise of Dr. Keith Harry of the International Centre for Distance Learning of the United Nations University based at the Open University, to whom we are indebted for a most useful bibliography. We should add that the views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the institutions represented but are the personal views of the individual contributors.

This book would not have been possible without the full cooperation and assistance of the contributors and members of the Distance Education Unit. Philip Juler and Dale Holt commented on all the chapters and helped with proofreading; while Nina Tripolino and Lyn Sceney typed and edited the manuscripts. To all these wonderful people, we extend our thanks.

Angela S. Castro
Kevin T. Livingston
Paul H. Northcott

10 August 1985

Australian study centres: some contemporary issues

Australia has a long history of involvement in distance education dating back to 1911 when the University of Queensland began to offer correspondence courses. External studies (another widely used synonym for distance education) finally gained a degree of acceptance and respectability when the University of New England in the state of New South Wales in 1955 joined the slowly growing number of institutions offering this mode of education. The commitment of this University to seeking parity of standards between internal and external teaching has been an inspiration to institutions which are now major providers of distance education within and outside Australia.[1]

Nevertheless, it was only in the 1970s after the Open University (OU) in the United Kingdom began to set new standards in this field that distance education came to be more fully accepted. Unlike the handful of Australian universities and many of the colleges of advanced education which offer both on-campus and off-campus studies, the OU has always been an exclusively distance-teaching institution. Three of its distinctive features which are of relevance to the theme of this book are:

- the development of instructional material by course teams which comprise subject and educational advisers;
- a centralised approach to the planning and production of multi-media course material; and
- a comprehensive system of decentralised student support throughout the country.

The last feature deserves some special mention because it is considered to be a vital component of the OU teaching strategy. The Open University's support system has a network of 260 local study centres equipped with teaching/learning material and staffed with administrative personnel, counsellors and tutors (Sewart 1981).

Australian universities have been much influenced by the Open University in their distance-teaching operations. Deakin University in Victoria, for example, has deliberately adopted the first two features,[2] but no single institution in Australia has had the resources to develop a comprehensive study centre network similar to that of the OU.

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[1]See Northcott 1984, White 1982.

[2]See Castro & Holt (1985)

The cases in this book show how some institutions have endeavoured to set up a few study centres or 'borrow' existing local facilities to provide a measure of support for their students. There is also a modest attempt to set up a telecommunications network at some centres for staff and student interaction. Others, like those in New South Wales[3] and South Australia (chapter 6), have developed different approaches which stress more direct interaction between teaching staff and students because they are dubious of the academic value of study centres as they are at present.

All the same, one can discern two emerging patterns in the provision of study centre facilities in Australia. The first is the willingness and effort of some institutions to pool resources or to share with others. The Western Australian concept of contracting (chapter 5), and the educational brokering of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre (chapter 3) and the North-West Council for Community Education in Tasmania (chapter 4) epitomise a rational solution to supporting increasing student needs through institutional collaboration. The second pattern is perhaps more of a common concern amongst distance-teaching institutions than a pattern. The concern shared by many institutions and which comes through very strongly in the following chapters is that funding study centres is becoming an increasingly difficult task. The present haphazard way of networking, which depends mostly on the goodwill of individuals and operates on a shoestring budget low on the priority of the overall funding allocation of most institutions, has many deficiencies. It cannot meet the ever-growing student demands for open education opportunities or the challenges of a technological age. The first problem has in fact been addressed as far back as 1974 in a federal government report entitled Open Tertiary Education in Australia. Final Report of the Committee on Open University to the Universities Commission. December 1974, commonly referred to as the the Karmel Report.

The Karmel Report has been dismissed, up till now, as a non-event in the history of Australian open tertiary education since its main recommendation for the establishment of a National Institute of Open Tertiary Education (NIOTE) in Canberra was never taken up by either the Labor Government of Gough Whitlam (1974-1975) or the first Liberal-Country Party Government of Malcolm Fraser (1975-1977). The NIOTE, however, was not proposed by the Committee as a degree-granting body like the OU (a mono-institutional model which was rejected by the Committee in favour of a multi-institutional model like the one existing in Australia at the time and even now), but was envisaged as a coordinating body for a national network of tertiary institutions and regional study centres. This is clear in the recommendation reproduced below.

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[3]We regret that because of our short production schedule, we were unable to include contributions from New South Wales. But references to student support in the University of New England are included in the bibliography by K. Harry.

2 (a) a network of university and college off-campus courses and open educational practices should be developed from a number of existing or new institutions which already have or are willing to assume a major commitment for such work, recommended by the National Institute of Open Tertiary Education after consultation with the appropriate authorities;

(b) ...

(c) the development of a scheme of study centres where appropriate, for joint use by interested institutions, should be encouraged and coordinated by the National Institute of Open Tertiary Education; and

(d) the National Institute of Open Tertiary Education should take steps to see that open educational practices are supported by suitable library facilities.

(Committee on Open University 1975, pp.99-100.)

Unfortunately, the Karmel Report could not exert any influence as a policy statement in the seventies, and tertiary institutions expanded their course offerings in an almost reckless fashion. There was also much duplication of courses - a development that Karmel cautioned against (p.9.). Distance education provision continued to be state-based and institutions did not generally feel constrained to coordinate their operations with others until the second Fraser Government (1977-1980) decided to take the drastic action of amalgamating a number of colleges of advanced education in South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland, which brought about some rationalisation of course offerings, at least in that sector.

The fragmented and uncoordinated approach of external tertiary studies provision finally came under attack in the Johnson Report of 1983. While Johnson recognised some signs of collaboration among tertiary education providers within states, he drew attention to the gaps in provision on a national scale and recommended that either the institutions themselves or the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission should set up a coordinating body very similar to NIOTE.

> We have considered the CTEC creating a coordinating agency, or working through the state coordinating bodies in an elaboration of the present system. We have considered the revivial of NIOTE. We have considered doing nothing. The one remaining proposal seems to be that the providers themselves set up the mechanism that suits them best to foster collaboration, bearing in mind that no coordination or collaboration sponsored from any quarter will work unless the providers make it work.

> Whatever coordinating agency is set up, it probably needs to have on it at least one person from each state: not to protect 'States' Rights' or act in any defensive and adversarial role, but simply to ensure that the agency's members are fully cognizant of the issues facing the sectors and institutions in their regions. This can hardly be done with less than one person per state, and might require more, though one would have misgivings about the functioning of a committee of more than about twelve. They could only meet a few times a year, and generally speaking the larger a group the more frequently must it meet to develop the corporate identity and sense of the acceptable which make for expenditious debate and decisions.
>
> (Johnson 1983, pp. 33-4)

He also recommended coordination of:

- the means of production and delivery of external studies;
- the development and use of study centres;
- library access;
- counselling and other support services.

Some of these he regarded as best coordinated on a regional scale. He also stated quite strongly that there was a need for collaboration and development of policy in areas of technological applications, for example, the 'cooperative establishment of a network of centres to facilitate interactive use of the satellites, sharing of equipment and other costs' (Johnson 1983, p.29).

At the time Johnson completed the final draft of his report in April 1983, just over two years before the launching of Australia's own domestic satellite, he could find no evidence of any proposals for the coordination of approaches for the use of new telecommunications facilities among professional people involved in the provision of external studies. But in fact the Tertiary Distance Education Network had just begun operating in Australia on the American satellite ATS-1, which was previously available only to the Pacific Island countries using the PEACESAT and University of the South Pacific networks.[4]

In between the Karmel Report and the Johnson Report came the Gough Report[5] (1980) which was funded by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission to investigate the existing use of study centres by four distance education systems, namely:

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[4]See Livingston (1984), Lange (1984a)

[5]There are two reports produced by Gough which are given as Gough 1980a and 1980b in the list of references at the end of this section and the bibliography of this book. The full report (Gough 1980a) was submitted to CTEC and a few copies were made available to the four institutions involved in the study. Shortly after, a condensed edition (Gough 1980b) was produced and distributed by the author.

- University of Queensland.

- Riverina College of Advanced Education (now renamed the Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education).

- The Victorian TAFE Off Campus Network.

- Deakin University.

From his studies, Gough developed a model of study centres and recommended support for more extensive networks shared by different institutions.

This Report (Gough 1980b), widely circulated and often cited, has generated a lot of debate. Distance educators generally accept as a basic tenet that the course material must be and should be so well designed that it is capable of inducing learning without students having to come to campus or attend face-to-face tutorials. Study centres, on the other hand, seem to be an attempt to recreate an on-campus situation in miniature.

David Sewart, Director of the North West Region of the Open University, tried to come to grips with this apparent contradiction in a well-argued paper in defence of the study centre concept. He focuses his case for local support around the role of the intermediaries:

> The primary concern of the intermediaries is not for the system itself, but rather for the individuals and, although they are normally employees of the system, they seek to represent individual needs to such an extent that they force the system to take cognisance of these needs. In education this function of intermediary is embraced within a variety of roles which we refer to as teacher, tutor, advisor, counsellor, etc. The intermediary is concerned with the general welfare and support of students, but the various applications of this concern, both in breadth and depth, are almost infinite. On the one hand he may provide information on basic administrative functions; on the other hand he may offer psychological and medical advice.
> (Sewart 1981, p.10)

Sewart questions, therefore, whether the need for the intermediaries can be met by mere packages of learning materials.

Anticipating criticism that 'the presence of study centres [is] a denial of the practical possibility ... of teaching at a distance' (p.11), Sewart argues that it is wrong to see study centres in the OU system solely against the background of traditional education; that is, as places in which conventional face-to-face contact between teachers and students takes place. While counsellors and tutors (the intermediaries) at study centres do meet the students face to face, their aim is really to wean students from the traditional method of face-to-face group teaching. In other words, the study centre is, in Sewart's view, a transitional phase in the educational process of the off-campus student. Therefore, he sees no contradiction in terms between distance education and the student support role of student centres within a distance education system.

But, as the chapters in this book reveal, study centres in Australia are not staffed in the way the OU centres are and there is, as yet, a lack of some clearly defined goal or shared philosophy about student support (academically or otherwise) among institutions. Furthermore, study centres, in most cases, do not serve the needs of one institution or only the needs of enrolled students. Take the study centres in the Northern Territory and Tasmania for example. Their clientele include, in many instances, local residents who are interested in further studies and who need some advice about what courses to take up or what institutions will best suit their needs. The range of services and the number of current and potential students these centres have to look after are quite staggering and often quite difficult to ascertain in advance. As a result, planning, funding and management are more complex and difficult for Australian study centres, most of which do not have a firm organisational structure any way.

But the pressures are on, with the Federal Government advocating a policy of equity and parity in education. The challenge to distance-teaching institutions is how to open their doors wider to accommodate young school-leavers and disadvantaged groups without an injection of extra funds from the Government.

There is also the impact of the new telecommunications technology on education as a whole. As far as distance education is concerned, the use of new technologies, on the one hand, does seem to bring with it promise of a possibility of regular and speedy interaction between distant learners and their tutors or home institutions. On the other hand, the combination of one-way media, such as print, audio or video programs, with two-way or multi-point telecommunications media has opened up new possibilities for educational provision at a distance.

Conscious of the rapid advances in communications technology, the Hon. Susan Ryan, Minister of Education, called for CTEC to report on:

> Alternative means of increasing enrolment and participation in tertiary education including the wide use of new technologies and more intensive utilization of resources available to institutions.
>
> (Ryan 1984a, p.5)

When CTEC responded with the recommendation to set up a Standing Committee on External Studies to advise the Commission, one of its five objectives was the investigation and encouragement of technological developments relevant to the provision of external studies. This national Standing Committee of CTEC has now been established under the chairmanship of Richard Johnson, author of the 1983 Johnson Report. Its nine members are drawn from a wide cross-section of educational institutions and organisations to represent a broad range of interests and concern for disadvantaged groups in the Australian community.

Two of the issues on this Committee's agenda are the networking of study centres and the networking of telecommunication facilities for all Australian educational institutions, whether they are for the use of off-campus or on-campus students.[6]

The distance-teaching institutions and educators have embraced the concept of study centres and welcomed the promises of communications technology more readily and enthusiastically than the mainstream Australian tertiary institutions because of the direct relevance of such developments to their work. But all indications are that this is changing. Papers by Lange (1984b), Anwyl (1984), Crick (1984), Ashendon and Costello (1984) and others show that a growing number of people and institutions are aware of the national trend towards what is called 'open education' rather than the more narrowly applied 'distance education'.

Some of the issues that distance educators have been investigating or researching are also now seen to have relevance for all spheres of academic activities and different modes of education. These include:

- The instructional design principles and facilitative approaches pioneered by distance educators in the 70s and 80s.
- The (albeit limited) application of communication technologies for teleconferencing.
- Research and development into information access (both direct or indirect, that is, via an intermediary).
- Educational consultancy within or outside an institutional framework.
- Commercialisation of educational products and services.
- Community involvement in educational programs.

Future developments are not easy to predict but there are certainly going to be major changes ahead. We are stepping into an era of innovation and entrepreneurship, heralded by intense debates and conflicts. The Federal Minister of Education summed it up well in 1984, when, looking at the exciting and troubling possibilities that lie ahead, she stated:

> It will be the task of policy and practice to remember that while the new technologies are qualitatively new in some respects, they are very familiar in others. They are means, not ends. It is not the new technologies which will determine how they are used. It will be much more familiar things: debate, conflict, values and politics
>
> (Ryan 1984b).

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[6]See Lange (1985) for a national overview and Castro, Juler & Smith (1985) for telecommunication networking plans among Victorian institutions.

The recently released report by Pritchard & Jones (1985) on cross-crediting[7] between the five major university providers of external studies (Queensland, New England, Murdoch, Deakin and Macquarie) shows how a genuine desire to work together can transcend institutional politics, but collaboration has also brought further challenges which may force institutions to take a fresh look at their own roles.

A good illustration is the academic collaboration between Deakin, Murdoch and Queensland to offer a Women's Studies major. Deakin Library has now been asked to stock recommended books on units developed and offered by Queensland and Murdoch for Deakin students enrolled in these units. The Library is willing to assist the students but, if such requests multiply for other courses, it will have serious budget implications for Deakin. Some long range planning will be a crucial factor in any further collaboration of this type.

The above example points to something that may be quite obvious, which is, that institutions may have to start thinking of themselves as 'study centres' for one another. This could result in some organisations restructuring their operations and this in turn may lead to better communications among institutions (Pritchard & Jones 1985, pp.17-19). Is it too much to hope that some of us are ready to be bold and innovative in making changes that will facilitate greater participation in an open form of education for all Australians?

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[7]Cross-crediting was another one of Karmel's recommendations.

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Chapter 1 Queensland

Study centres of the University of Queensland

Mavis Kelly

ABSTRACT

There are nine providers of distance education in Queensland, each of which has adopted a different style of teaching. Five of these institutions use regional centres in some way to supplement central support services. The author gives a detailed account of ways in which study centres are used by the University of Queensland. The University maintains a network of physical centres and regional support staff which cannot be dismantled easily in spite of student population shifts. The University may need to reconsider the effectiveness of its face-to-face regional tutorial system given its inability to reach all students in Queensland and its failure to attract all students who could access it. This paper underlines the need for detailed investigation on centre effectiveness. Effectiveness cannot, however, be defined solely in terms of cost effectiveness. To many people in Queensland the existence of physical centres and personnel in rural areas is an important statement about the value of higher education. In a state which has the lowest participation in higher education of any in Australia, the value of this presence cannot be underestimated.

AN OVERVIEW

The state of Queensland covers a huge area and its population is highly decentralised. Towns and cities are scattered along its coastline and the population is spread even more thinly over the west and north-west of the State.

Many of the eight thousand people who study externally are not only studying off campus but at a distance. This is particularly true of students who are enrolled with the major providers of distance education which are located in the south-east corner of the State: some students live more than two thousand kilometres from the main campuses.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that a decentralised system of student support services has developed in Queensland, given the geographical isolation of students and the cost and inconvenience of travelling between home and the main campuses.

Currently, there are nine providers of tertiary distance education in Queensland:

- Brisbane College of Advanced Education (BCAE)
- Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education (CIAE)
- Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (DDIAE)
- James Cook University of North Queensland (JCUNQ)
- McAuley College (MC)
- Queensland Agricultural College (QAC)
- Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT)
- Technical and further education colleges (TAFE)
- University of Queensland (UQ)

BCAE, MC, QIT, TAFE and UQ are all located in Brisbane, JCUNQ is at Townsville, DDIAE at Toowoomba, and QAC is at Gatton.

Table 1.1 gives some idea of the external student population, fields of study and levels of courses offered in these institutions.

Table 1.1 Comparison of 1984 external student enrolment of Queensland's tertiary institutions with subject and level information

	BCAE	CIAE	DDIAE	JCUNQ	MC	QAC	QIT	TAFE	UQ	TOTAL
Total no. of external students	993	1524	2369	357	271	136	321	136	2197	8304
Field of study (No.of external students)										
1 Teacher Education/Education	987	-	441	275	271	-	-	-	499	2473
2 Business/Commerce	-	787	821	-	-	136	71	136	297	2248
3 Engineering & Surveying	-	22	863	-	-	-	-	-	-	885
4 Applied Science/Science	-	450	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	460
5 Maths & Computing	-	253	142	-	-	-	-	-	-	395
6 Law	-	-	-	-	-	-	250	-	98	348
7 Humanities/Arts	6	12	102	-	-	-	-	-	1289	1409
8 Social Science/Work	-	-	-	82	-	-	-	-	4	86
Level of course (No.of external students)										
Post-secondary qualification	120	762	1212	82	106	136	-	136	-	2554
Undergraduate	615	332	1009	247	-	-	292	-	2034	4529
Postgraduate	258	430	148	28	165	-	29	-	163	1221
Total no.of students: (Full- & part-time & external)	7464	2787	4459	1168	568	1116	8076	929	18102	44669
% of external students in total enrolment	13	55	53	5	48	12	4	15	12	

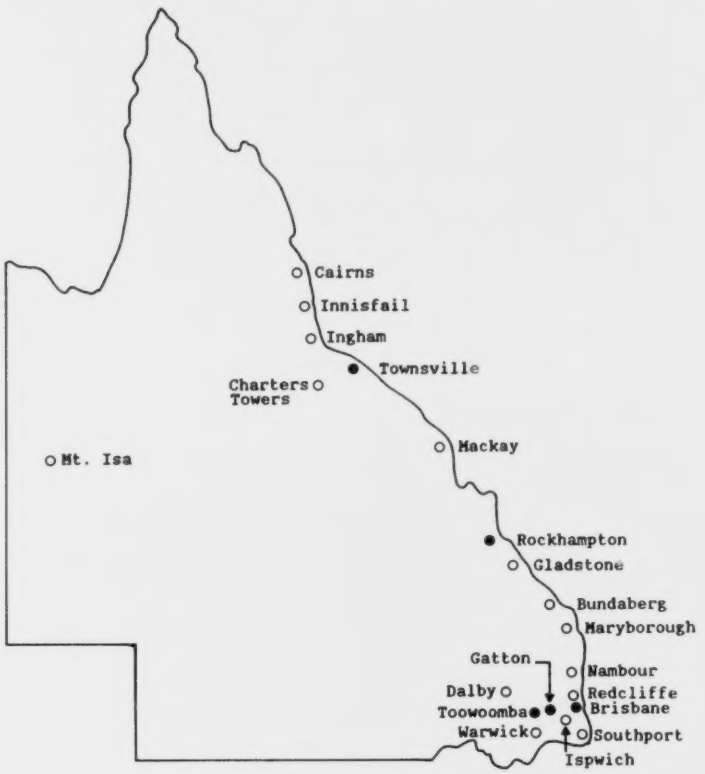
Sources of data: University of Queensland Statistics 1984 and Advanced Education Statistics Queensland 1984 (as at 30 April 1984) by Board of Advanced Education, Brisbane 1984.

Of these nine providers, only five have chosen to establish study centre networks:

- Brisbane College of Advanced Education
- Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education
- Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education
- James Cook University of North Queenlsnd
- University of Queensland

Figure 1.1 shows the location of study centres used by these five providers.

Figure 1.1 Providers of tertiary distance education in Queensland and their study centres



Brisbane College of Advanced Education shares all the study centres of the University of Queensland and contributes to the yearly overhead costs as a major user. It maintains no regional librarians or liaison officers, but relies on telephone tutorials, some face-to-face teaching in the two closest centres, and occasional visits by academic and administrative staff during semesters to the more outlying study centres.

James Cook University of North Queensland maintains six study centres in the north of the state: three permanent centres in Cairns, Mackay and Mt.Isa, and three ad hoc or moveable centres, depending on concentrations of student enrolments (currently in Innisfail, Ingham and Charters Towers). Lecturers travel to these centres several times a semester and the University provides some part-time librarians. Additionally, lecturers conduct infrequent telephone tutorials to individual students and groups.

The remaining three institutions (University of Queensland, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education and Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education) have perhaps a stronger commitment to study centres. All have followed the University of Queensland's tradition of decentralised student support which began with the establishment of the first study centre in 1949, and it is pertinent to explore in some depth the influence this has had on the current Queensland study centre networking.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

The University of Queensland maintains a network of study centres which play an important part in the University's distance education program throughout the state. To understand the role of the centres, it is important to know something about the history of external teaching in the University as well as the centralised support services currently provided for external students.

The University of Queensland has been offering external courses since it opened in 1911. Initially, courses catered almost exclusively for the educational needs of teachers working in remote locations in Queensland. Today, there are more than three thousand students enrolled in two hundred subjects each year. Undergraduate degree programs are available in Arts, Commerce and Economics, Education and Law. Postgraduate degrees are offered in Education, English and History. For many years, external teaching was the responsibility of academic departments in addition to their on-campus teaching commitments. Course materials consisted of written lecture notes and reading lists, and no regional support services existed.

Departmental responsibility for external teaching continued until 1949 when the Department of External Studies was set up as an autonomous department in the University, with its own teaching staff in subject areas where there were relatively large enrolments. External teaching was now a recognisable and separate activity in the University structure and it was at this time that initiatives to set up study centres occurred. In 1949, the University Senate approved the setting up of centres in Townsville, Rockhampton and Ipswich. A Toowoomba centre followed in 1951 and the Maryborough centre in 1958.

In that decade, centres were established in high schools and deputy principals of these schools became volunteer regional representatives for the University; they were known as officers-in-charge. The early centres were modest with only a room set aside in the school for students to meet and a small collection of books. Nevertheless, the officer-in-charge provided a channel of communication between students and the Director of External Studies of the University and opportunities to meet other students existed even if it meant 'going back to school'. Lecturers who visited their students now had a place to meet them. Centres established in this way were, moreover, a low cost option for the University since there was very little need to commit funds for either capital or recurrent expenditure.

Gradually, centres were relocated in other premises, usually as a result of community initiatives and with local financial support. There is now a network of twelve study centres throughout Queensland, seven of which have accommodation which is owned or leased by the University, and five use facilities provided by other institutions such as colleges of advanced education, teachers' centres[1] and James Cook University of North Queensland. Maintaining the centre network is no longer a low-cost operation.

In addition to the study centre network, the University of Queensland provides a number of centralised services to external students. These include:

- Study materials in the form of course outlines, study guides and lecture notes, readers, annotated bibliographies, as well as audiotapes and videotapes in some subjects.

- Group telephone tutorials and individual telephone tuition in some subjects.

- Non-compulsory study schools in Brisbane each year for undergraduates and a period of compulsory attendance on campus for postgraduate students.

- A postal library service from the Thatcher Library which houses a sizeable collection of books for use by external students.

- Academic counselling and advice on degree planning.

- Availability of lecturers for consultation by telephone or mail, or face-to-face mode if a student is in Brisbane or when lecturers visit centres.

In 1983, the School of External Studies and Continuing Education was formed, incorporating the existing Division of External Studies and the Institute of Modern Languages. A newly established Continuing Education Unit was added to the School at this time. Under the leadership of the Director, the School is responsible for the coordination of external teaching in the University and for maintaining academic support services to students. The School continues to be staffed by academics who are solely responsible for external teaching, though a number of departments outside the School also have responsibility for both external and internal students. Some continuing education activities rely on regional centres for facilities and the organisation of programs conducted in the local area.

The University of Queensland appointed a Course Development Adviser in 1981 and the School now has a Course Development Unit which aims to assist lecturing staff in improving the quality of course materials and support to students during their study period.

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[1]A teachers' centre is set up by the State Department of Education, usually within the grounds of a high school for use by teachers who are studying or undertaking some kind of educational activity.

Installation of a computer system in 1983 provides for better quality printed materials and improved administrative functions. Thus the University is attempting to improve its distance education program at a central level and expand at a regional level by setting up new centres, but with restricted funding. Some hard decisions will need to be made in the next decade about how best to invest funds in the distance education program.

Location of study centres

In the University of Queensland network there are two categories of study centres.

- Category A centres are located in premises which are owned or leased by the University. These centres are located in Bundaberg, Cairns, Mackay, Maryborough, Nambour, Redcliffe and Toowoomba.

- Category B centres rely on facilities of other institutions. They are located in Gladstone, Ipswich, Mt. Isa, Rockhampton, Southport and Townsville.

Table 1.2 shows the location of all twelve study centres and the number of external students in 1984.

Table 1.2 Location of study centres of the University of Queensland and number of external students enrolled in 1984

Study Centre	No. of external students
Brisbane (University)	515
Bundaberg	73
Cairns	103
Gladstone	39
Mackay	72
Maryborough	39
Mt. Isa	42
Nambour	111
Redcliffe	126
Rockhampton	104
Southport	157
Toowoomba	15
Townsville	79

The principal duties of the officers-in-charge are:

1 liaison and publicity;
2 services to external students;
3 general administration;
4 examination supervision; and
5 centre management.

These duties are described in detail below.

1 Liaison and publicity

As representatives of the University in the local community, officers-in-charge receive many enquiries from existing and prospective students and other members of the community. This demand for information means that these representatives need to be familiar with most aspects of University administration and, in particular, with the way in which the School of External Studies and Continuing Education functions. To assist them, the School provides written information which is updated regularly and also convenes an annual meeting of officers-in-charge in Brisbane. Where appropriate, officers-in-charge are expected to liaise with media representatives in their area, for example to advertise careers days, enrolment dates, and continuing education activities sponsored by the University in local centres.

2 Services to external students

Organisation of tutorial groups at the beginning of each semester occupies a large part of the officer-in charge's time. This involves advertising for tutors, interviewing them, making a recommendation to the appropriate lecturers in Brisbane and using his or her own judgement to ensure that limited tutorial funds are allocated fairly. Where tutorial groups cannot be formed, either because funds are unavailable or because student numbers in a subject do not warrant it, the officer-in-charge is expected to encourage the formation of self-help groups and provide some guidance to facilitate their operation. In some centres the officer-in-charge will call a meeting of all students in the area to assist in forming tutorial groups, while in other centres the process occurs by mail and telephone.

In larger centres, such as Mackay and Cairns, the School of External Studies and Continuing Education provides weekend seminars each year. It is the responsibility of the officer-in-charge to organise and publicise these events. Likewise, when individual lecturers wish to visit centres these representatives are expected to facilitate the visit and encourage students to attend. Each year, graduation dinners are held in all centres for the benefit of newly graduated students and their families. Obviously, these duties weigh more heavily on the officer-in-charge in areas where enrolments are high and students are actively pursuing their studies.

3 General administration

All centres are funded and administered from the Brisbane main campus but the officer-in-charge is expected to undertake correspondence on administrative matters with administrative officers in the School and in the

University to facilitate the smooth running of the centres. An annual report is required from him or her, covering such matters as tutorial group operation, teletutorial usage, staff visits, important events of the year and general administrative problems that may have occurred.

4 Examination supervision

The University's examination office frequently asks officers-in-charge to act as chief supervisors for examinations in their area and centre facilities are often used for examinations. An additional fee is paid for these extra duties. In some areas, a number of different institutions will require the use of centre facilities for examinations and coordination of these activities falls to the officer-in-charge.

5 Centre management

In category A centres, the officer-in-charge has a number of additional duties and is paid a slightly higher honorarium in these cases. As centre manager, the officer-in-charge is responsible for determining centre opening hours, scheduling tutorial times, supervising contract cleaning and forwarding accounts for utilities (lighting, telephone) to the University.

Arrangements for security and maintenance of buildings and the equipment in them are ultimately the responsibility of the University, but obviously the officer-in-charge needs to be aware of and report problems promptly. Centre facilities are also sometimes hired out to local organisations.

Where centre facilities are shared by a number of tertiary institutions, the officer-in-charge is responsible for liaison with regional representatives of these institutions, making sure that the interests of the University of Queensland's students are protected in timetabling of activities such as telephone tutorials, face-to-face tutorials and use of all other facilities.

Officers-in-charge are not paid a salary but an honorarium. Several have full-time employment in addition to the service that they give to the University and many are former external students, or tutors. When the original centres were established the officer-in-charge was invariably the deputy principal of a local high school who donated his or her services. Today they represent a diverse range of community interests. Some have occupied the role for a number of years and are active in promoting the interests of the University in their community.

The Ringrose librarians are also very important representatives at the regional level. While the officer-in-charge might be very active in centre management, it is the librarian who is physically present during advertised opening hours and who is asked to answer queries - many unrelated to library matters. Librarians are paid a salary commensurate with their qualifications. Sometimes a limited amount of money is available also to employ a clerical assistant to facilitate the work of officers-in-charge and librarians in busy centres.

Table 1.3 gives the approximate distance of study centres from Brisbane, population of towns and cities in which the centres are located and an indication of the main activities of the regions.

Table 1.3 University of Queensland study centres: population and characteristics of regions and distances from the University in Brisbane

Centre location	Distance from Brisbane (km)	Region population	Region characteristics
Cairns	1950	35,000	Tourist centre
Mt. Isa	1920	29,000	Mining centre
Townsville	1570	81,000	Sugar terminal Copper refinery
Mackay	1160	30,000	Cane growing Sugar refinery
Rockhampton	770	51,000	Beef centre
Gladstone	630	18,000	Aluminium smelting Coal loading port
Bundaberg	400	29,000	Cane growing
Maryborough	280	20,000	Cane growing
Toowoomba	140	62,000	Agriculture
Nambour and Sunshine Coast	115	70,000	Tourist centre
Southport	100	95,000	Tourist centre
Redcliffe	40	11,000	Satellite of Brisbane
Brisbane (University) -		925,000	Capital city

Accommodation in centres

Ten of the thirteen study centres are located in modern buildings and provide a pleasant environment for meeting and study purposes. The remaining three centres in Maryborough, Nambour and Gladstone are in old buildings and, though they are functional, are less inviting from an aesthetic point of view. Tutorial rooms and meeting rooms are available in all centres.

Opening hours for centres vary. In category A centres, they are largely determined by the hours when a part-time librarian is on duty (fifteen to twenty hours each week, at times when the student demand seems to be greatest:

these seem to be early evenings on weekdays and Saturday mornings). The Redcliffe Centre is open forty hours per week because it doubles as a teachers' centre; and the category B centres are open for extended hours since they are located in tertiary institutions. Centres are also open for the purpose of local tutorials or telephone tutorials by negotiation with the officer-in-charge. What emerges from this account of opening hours is that in six of the seven centres which are owned or leased by the University, access on a drop-in basis is restricted. It is not known if this restriction inconveniences or discourages students.

Physical resources in centres

All of the category A centres (except Redcliffe) as well as the category B centres at Southport and Mt. Isa have a library area which houses a collection of books and other materials supplied by the Thatcher Library of the University. These are known as Ringrose collections. Students in Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba have access to library facilities in James Cook University, Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education and Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education respectively. The Gladstone and Redcliffe centres have no library facilities that could be compared with the other centres.

All centres provide access to teleconferencing facilities which are adequate to meet the present low-level demand for tutorials by telephone by University of Queensland lecturers and students. Where the facilities are not the property of the University, as in category B centres, for example, the institution which owns them has first call on their use. The University or local community groups have installed basic teaching aids and equipment in category A centres; for example, white boards, overhead projectors, audio cassette players and photocopiers. None of the centres has video replay equipment or microcomputers supplied by the University - an indication that these items do not feature in teaching methods of the University at present.

Increased reliance on computer-assisted learning is projected for the near future in some courses. The University has made an investment in new computer facilities and hired staff to facilitate the introduction of computer-assisted learning for all students. Depending on the outcome of these initiatives, it is likely that computer terminals will be installed in study centres in the future.

Human resources in centres

In each of the twelve centres there is a regional representative known as the officer-in-charge, who is responsible for the management of all activities connected with the centre. In category A centres, the officer-in-charge is also responsible for the buildings which are owned or leased by the University. In addition to the officer-in-charge, there are part-time librarians attached to all category A centres except Redcliffe, and to the category B centres at Mt. Isa and Southport.

Part-time tutors are attached to all centres. The Students' Union also has a network of experienced external students who have volunteered to act as support people for other students in their region. These are known as area communicators.

Finally, there are the part-time tutors who are employed by the University to maintain the rather extensive face-to-face tutorial system. At any time, about fifty tutors might be employed in over 100 subjects, usually offering ten hours of tutorials per subject per semester.

Tutors are provided with guidelines for the conduct of tutorials and receive copies of all course materials and set texts. They are usually graduates (preferably honours graduates) in the subject area in which they tutor. The degree to which tutors liaise with their lecturers varies from very close contact to minimal contact and although tutors are expected to report on the activities of the tutorial group at the end of each semester, very little is known at a central level about how well the tutorial system works. Unlike the librarians and officers-in-charge who are known to central administrative, academic and library staff, tutors are not widely known except perhaps to lecturers in whose course they have tutored for some time.

Functions of centres

It can be seen from the above description that study centres play an important role in establishing a University presence in Queensland's rural communities. Several of the larger category A centres function as mini-campuses and in such centres there is a lively interaction between students and representatives of the University.

A question that is worth exploring is how much influence regional services have in fostering the academic and intellectual development of external students. We do know that centres provide a meeting place for students who wish to take advantage of it. They provide tutorial sessions in a number of subjects, particularly at the first-year level, limited library facilities, opportunities for teletutorials and fast access to information about the University. In some communities, the centres also provide a focus of interest for graduates and professional people in the community who wish to maintain their association with the University through the formation of University Societies which offer support to the centres.

An example of this bond between the University and the community in the Maryborough centre appears to be an important aspect of the influence of the University of Queensland in the State. The original centre was established in a local high school in about 1958. From 1963 onwards, the Maryborough and District University Society came into existence and over the next two decades played an active role in forming and maintaining the existing centre. An insightful and informative account of this period of community-university liaison is given in The First Twenty Years of the Maryborough and District University Society, 1963 - 1983, written by Mr. Fred

Chapter 2 Victoria

Past development and an emerging possible future for Victorian distance education

Peter Smith, Brian Scorgie and David Edge

ABSTRACT

The Victorian chapter examines the roles of off-campus study centres developed by Deakin University, and uses the Gordon Technical College as a vehicle for examining the development and roles of the very different study centre concept which is the lynchpin of the Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network.

Finally, the chapter pays attention to collaborative arrangements developing between the two institutions and an emerging possibility for Victorian study centres necessitated by technological changes.

OVERVIEW

Among Australian states, Victoria is demographically unusual in several aspects important to the provision of distance education. First, situated in the extreme southeast corner of Australia, it is the smallest mainland state with an area of 227,600 sq. km. Its population of just over 4,000,000 inhabitants yields a population density ratio of 17.5 persons/sq. km. In Australian terms that is a very high density, the next nearest state in density terms being New South Wales with a ratio of 6.6. The Northern Territory has the lowest ratio of just 0.1 persons per sq. km.

Within the boundaries of Victoria reside 26.3 per cent of the total Australian population of 15.2 million, and Australia's second largest city, Melbourne, has a population of 2.8 million.

Victoria is well served by Australian standards in post-secondary education. There are four universities, some twenty colleges of advanced education (CAE), and around thirty colleges of technical and further education (TAFE).

In terms of distance education the major providers are:

- Deakin University in Geelong
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Melbourne
- Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education in Churchill

Borchardt who has been a long-standing member of the Society and a member of the Maryborough Centre Management Committee. This paper is reproduced by the School of External Studies and Continuing Education in its 1984 Working Paper series.

One centre function which is increasing in importance with the growing number of tertiary institutions in Queensland, and indeed in Australia, which offer external courses is that centres are fast becoming a focus for use by a number of different institutions.

University of Queensland students and their tutors are hosted by James Cook University of North Queensland, Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education and some small local teachers' centres. In its turn, the University of Queensland plays host to students of the above institutions as well as Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education and the Brisbane College of Advanced Education in some of its study centres. In return for the use of University centres in this way, Capricornia Institute, Darling Downs Institute and Brisbane College make an annual payment to the University of Queensland, which contributes to installation and maintenance of some additional facilities in centres.

In some areas such as Cairns there are external students enrolled with a large number of tertiary institutions throughout Australia who regularly use the centre.

Problems that do arise do not stem from any lack of goodwill between institutions but because there are differences in the way courses are taught and hence in the type of equipment or technological hardware that is necessary to teach them. For example, a lecturer from the Brisbane College may travel up to Bundaberg to give a session, bringing videotaped material only to find that there is no replay equipment in the centre. Darling Downs Institute may be teaching a course which relies on microcomputers, and having installed these facilities in a centre such as Maryborough, find that student usage is creating too much demand on the limited space and facilities. Furthermore, some institutions may find that their enrolments are increasing in a centre where University of Queensland enrolments are declining so that a high percentage of the students using the centre are their own and not the University's.

These are the kinds of issues which need to be resolved by major users and reviewed regularly. They arise from entry of more and more institutions into the distance education field and from the changes in population distribution which Queensland has undergone in recent years.

Centre usage

The preceding discussion provides an account of the intended functions of study centres but it needs to be balanced against information of how many students <u>can</u> and <u>do</u> use study centres and whether they use them in ways expected by the University.

At the end of 1983, the Teaching Committee of the School of External Studies and Continuing Education distributed a survey to a sample of undergraduate external students who were resident in Queensland.[2] The survey dealt with a number of issues, one of which was the use of regional support services including: study centres, tutorial groups, Ringrose librarians, officers-in-charge, study groups, individual student contact and area communicators who are co-ordinated by the Students Union.

In 1983 grade point average scores (GPA)[3] for respondents were available and these were compared with categories of responses to survey questions. Listed below are some of the questions we put to our students.

> How many students have access to and actually use study centres?
>
> In response to the question 'Did you go to a local study centre this year?', 42.3 per cent of respondents said they did not have access to a local study centre. It should be taken into account that approximately 20 per cent of all students are resident in the Brisbane metropolitan area and in theory have access to the St.Lucia campus. Yet, they are permitted to enrol as external students only if they can demonstrate that disability, work or family commitments make it very difficult for them to attend the campus on a regular basis.
>
> Of the remaining 57.7 per cent who had access to a study centre, 60.6 per cent or 35 per cent of the total said they did not go to a study centre at all. Only 27.8 per cent or 16.0 per cent of the total said they went to a centre frequently. 22.7 per cent of the total had access to a centre but never went there.
>
> A chi square analysis of frequency in the seven GPA categories x categories of response was not significant at the 0.05 level, indicating no significant difference in the distribution of GPA scores between students who had no access to centres, students who had access to centres but did not attend them and students who attended frequently or infrequently.
>
> What were the main reasons for visiting a study centre?

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[2]Surveys were sent to a stratified random sample drawn from 1,900 undergraduate external students who were enrolled in the faculties of Arts, Commerce, Economics, Law and Education in November 1983 and who were resident in Queensland. Survey results were based on 354 of the 398 responses for whom full data was available. This represents 55.8 per cent of the sample to whom surveys were sent.

[3]Seven categories of grade point average (GPA) are used for assessment at the University of Queensland. GPA 1 = lowest, GPA 7 = highest, and GPA 4 is a pass grade.

components of study.[1] Therefore, 'a student should be able to complete the course without necessarily attending the campus or study centre' (Gough 1979a, p.33).

For the 1978 academic year and its first intake of students, Deakin established a network of ten study centres. They were not to be seen as alternative campuses providing on-campus tuition, as this would contradict the philosophy of distance education programs in requiring students to attend at pre-specified times for study.

The study centres were seen as providing:

- a university presence;
- accommodation for occasional tutorials and lectures;
- facilities for storing, using and lending equipment;
- a meeting place for students; and
- a reference centre.
  (Gough 1979b, p.22)

They were not intended to provide a forum for any academic assistance to students. However, it was anticipated that where enough students in a district were enrolled in the same course, a tutorial class would be formed meeting under the guidance of a local tutor appointed by the University. This was based closely on the Open University model of local tutors and counsellors operating from regional study centres.

The choice of location for study centres was based on the potential numbers of students who were likely to make effective use of facilities. In such communities, the University sought cooperation from other educational institutions such as colleges of advanced education or continuing education centres to established study centres where teaching and learning facilities were already available. This policy was adopted to avoid the unnecessary duplication of facilities.

It was felt, however, that Melbourne warranted a centre by itself because of the large Deakin off-campus enrolment there.

Table 2.1 shows the distribution of off-campus students by location.

The Melbourne Study Centre, established in the same building as the Victorian Council for Adult Education, is located in the central business district of Australia's second largest city. Because of the very large population, and therefore enrolment, this Centre is the most sophisticated and most successful in terms of facilities and rate of student usage.

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[1]The School of Management at Deakin has now made residential schools compulsory for its MBA students following the release of The Ralph Report which attacked the program's optional contacts between staff and students. This was notwithstanding the fact that great care had been taken in the instructional design of the course material to ensure that such interaction was facilitated through the effective use of the print media and audio tapes.

Responses to this question indicated that students go to centres for several reasons but most often to attend tutorials and to borrow library books. Other reasons were to attend a self-help group, to request information, to find a quiet place to work, or to have informal meetings with other students.

Clearly, centre usage is more often related to scheduled activities such as tutorials and library opening hours rather than informal usage such as private meetings and study. Restricted opening hours in many centres may well discourage these less structured activities.

Table 1.4 summarises the results for this section of the survey. In no case was the Chi square analysis of level of GPA x categories of responses significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that none of the types of usage listed makes a difference one way or the other to the pattern of academic performance of the students in this sample.

Table 1.4 University of Queensland 1983 study centre survey: usage frequency of services provided

	When access is possible				No access is possible
Visits to study centres	Frequent 16.0%	Infrequent 19.0%	Never 22.7%		42.3%
Tutorial attendance	Frequent 15.3%	Infrequent 12.4%	None available 36.1%	Prefer not 5.2%	40.0%
Contact with Ringrose librarians	Frequent 9.4%	Infrequent 11.1%	Never 44.9%		34.6%
Contact with officers-in-charge	Frequent 4.9%	Infrequent 29.9%	Never 44.9%		20.3%
Self help groups	Yes 8.4%	None available 51.7%	Prefer not 7.5%		32.4%
Individual student contact	Frequent 17.4%	Infrequent 22.0%	Never 43.4%		17.1%
Contact with area communicators	Frequent 2.3%	Infrequent 6.7%	Never 63.1%		27.9%

Table 1.5 shows the degree of satisfaction expressed with centre facilities by students who used the centres either frequently or infrequently. When students actually go to tutorials, consult Ringrose librarians, see the officer-in-charge, attend self help groups and consult other students, they appear to be satisfied with the outcome, saying that these activities are helpful to study in spite of the finding that their actual GPA results are not affected either way by these activities. Fewer students found contact with area communicators helpful.

Figures vary in the no access column in table 1.4 from one type of contact to another. Not all tutorials or self-help groups take place in study centres and access to individuals may be possible by letter or telephone providing an extended range of access to librarians, officer-in-charge, individual students and area communicators.

Table 1.5 University of Queensland 1983 study centre survey: rate of satisfaction with different forms of regional contacts

Contacts	An aid to study	Not an aid study
	%	%
Tutorials	89.6	10.4
Ringrose librarians	95.5	4.5
Officers-in-charge	88.2	11.8
Self-help groups	74.4	25.6
Individual contact	91.9	8.9
Area communicators	64.3	55.6

What emerges from these results is that approximately forty per cent of external students have no access to the University's regional centres and hence their access to tutorials and Ringrose libraries is also limited. About half of this group may, in principle, be able to use library facilities on the main campus but no tutorials are provided in the Brisbane metropolitan area. Some students who do not have access to the centres do, however, contact regional representatives and other students presumably by letter or telephone. Where any kind of contact occurs it appears to be reasonably satisfactory but does not seem to influence academic performance one way or the other.

Quite a high percentage of students do not avail themselves of opportunities for regional contact even when they could do so. This fact need not be interpreted negatively. Students have every right to refrain from contact if they choose to do so. For purposes of this discussion, however, it does mean that the number of students who actually avail themselves of regional support services is rather limited.

Cost of regional support services

Provision of education for external students is not necessarily less costly than for on-campus students. While it is true that the University does not need to provide accommodation on campus for the twelve per cent of its students who study externally, investment in these students is almost totally in the form of recurrent expenditure. Only the centres at Cairns and Mackay are in buildings in which an investment of capital expenditure has been made.

In addition, cost of centralised services represented by lecturers' salaries, printing of materials, purchase of audiotapes, mailing of course materials and library books are all areas of recurrent expenditure.

Regional expenditure is represented by honorariums to officers-in-charge, salaries of tutors and librarians and centre maintenance costs such as cleaning, electricity, rates, rent, security, telephone charges, photocopying, etc.

Cost of both centralised and regional services are increasing by up to ten per cent annually and at a time when the University is concerned to trim recurrent expenditure, the School of External Studies and Continuing Education is in the difficult position of requiring substantial increases to maintain existing services to external students.

Essential centralised services which affect all external students must obviously take precedence over regional services which, in their present form, cannot reach all students and which are not used by all students who could access them.

It is unlikely that numbers of external adult students will increase in the near future. Faculties have combined quotas for on- and off-campus students and the current national emphasis on provision of higher education for school leavers may well mean that fewer places are available to mature age students who comprise the bulk of the external student population at the University of Queensland. A decline in numbers of external students would not appreciably reduce costs and would certainly increase the cost of each unit of printed material. Study centre costs remain the same regardless of the numbers of students who use them.

Moreover, there are some category A centres located in areas in which student numbers have declined in recent years. Given current financial constraints, a new centre would not be established in these areas. At the same time increasing population and external enrolments in other areas have prompted the opening of new centres in the 1980s. None of the existing category A centres has been closed and in almost all cases they remain busy centres, since enrolments of external students with other institutions in Queensland have increased in these locations.

Cost effectiveness is an important aspect of the evaluation of regional support services but it is not the only important variable. The centres help to maintain a University presence in local communities and continue to foster University-community cooperation which has existed for many years. Universities and colleges do not exist in a social and political vacuum and at a time when they are competing with other organisations for funding, the value of higher education is an ideal that needs to be kept alive. One way of achieving this is for the University to be seen to be active in regional centres.

A way out of the present impasse is to give greater emphasis to continuing education not only on campus in Brisbane but throughout the State, using regional study centres as bases. The Continuing Education Unit within the School of External Studies and Continuing Education has been in existence for barely three years and for the most part has (necessarily) been occupied with establishing the viability of continuing education in the Brisbane area. We do know, however, that when continuing education activities have been taken to local centres, they have been enthusiastically received. One suspects, furthermore, that a proportion of students who are currently enrolled in credit courses are in reality pursuing short-term continuing education goals.

At another level, the structure of regional support services to students taking credit courses is due for review. We have seen that approximately forty per cent of Queensland external students cannot access study centres or tutorials and of the remaining sixty per cent, a sizeable proportion do not, in fact, avail themselves of these services. This does not appear to affect the pattern of performance of students who remain active in their programs over the whole year but it may well affect the incidence of withdrawal which is relatively high, particularly in the first year of study.

Student withdrawal reduces the cost effectiveness of both centralised and regional support services. Experience of other distance-teaching institutions such as the Open University, has shown that withdrawal can be arrested to some extent by an investment in tutorial services for all in the first year of study. The only way to do this is the use of teletutorials, or a system of face-to-face tutorials. In the section which follows in this chapter, an account is given of support services provided by Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education and, as we shall see, an important aspect of this program is the provision of numerous telephone tutorial sessions.

Study centre network of the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education

Judy Timmins

ABSTRACT

All study centres shared by the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education with other institutions are gradually moving from government-funded teacher's education centres to TAFE colleges. The regional liaison officer (RLO) network is the basis of the Institute's support system. Study centres are mainly used for pre-planned teletutorials which are integrated with other study and computer-managed learning material, and for study group meetings.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

The Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (DDIAE) at Toowoomba, Queensland, initiated its network of study centres and regional liaison officers (RLO) in 1978 and they have always been integral to the student support system. Administered by the Outreach Section of the Department of External and Continuing Education, facilities are shared in fifteen regional centres, in addition to the main campus at Toowoomba. The centres are shared with a variety of institutions as is shown below. The number of centres are in brackets.

- Teacher/Education Centres (7)
- TAFE Colleges (3)
- Queensland University Centres (3)
- Other tertiary institutions like Capricornia Institute and Griffith University (2)

In addition, two centres, Emerald and Roma, with widely scattered student population, are informal study centres in that they have a regional liaison officer but do not usually have teletutorials or any regular meeting rooms. The DDIAE is gradually moving towards closer cooperation with TAFE colleges in siting study centres. Access hours and facilities are expected to be better and the financial burden for DDIAE will be considerably less.

It is the Institute's policy to contribute to the cost of running these centres, and equipment and library resources are provided where possible. In every centre a loud-speaking telephone has been installed for telephone tutorials. In seven study centres Hitachi Success microcomputers have been installed to facilitate the computer-managed learning (CML) components of external units, and this system will be expanded to all study centres by early 1986. Students also use the microcomputers in some centres to study computing and computer-related topics, such as spreadsheets in accounting and electronic data processing in auditing.

By far the major use of study centres is for scheduled telephone tutorials, followed by CML activities and the meeting of study groups. Satellite ground-stations (for ATS-1) were installed in Toowoomba and Maryborough, and preliminary satellite tutorials were conducted in the foundation Economics course. It is planned to provide evening satellite teletutorials via AUSSAT in 1986 using the State telecommunications system in the six centres which have 2-way voice-only satellite ground-stations.

FUNCTIONS OF STUDY CENTRES

Darling Downs Institute differs in five main ways from other tertiary institutions in the use of study centres. Appendix 1.1 shows the location and facilities of the study centres and the number of external students attached to each centre.

Teleturorials

Study centres are seldom used for lecturer visits and face-to-face teaching, and regional tutors are not provided. Instead, evening telephone tutorials are offered three or four times a week at a centre and self-help study groups form quite naturally from these sessions. Brief agendas for telephone tutorials are incorporated into study materials and planned about six months in advance. Additionally, students can request teletutorials on specific subjects. Local students also participate in teletutorials in two Toowoomba Outreach studios. Lecturers receive training in teaching by loudspeaking telephone, and students are assisted in their participation by the regional liaison officers who are in attendance for all tutorials.

Although teletutorials currently are run on weekday evenings for about forty-five minutes each in the 6 pm to 8 pm time periods (that is allowing up to four sessions each evening), a recent survey has shown that education students are willing to attend teletutorials in the 4 pm to 6 pm periods while engineering students prefer weekends. Occasional daytime tutorials are also given on request.

Telephone hook-ups have always been part of regional orientation meetings. Students are able to discuss their individual concerns with staff back at the Toowoomba campus and get more general advice on study skills and course information. In 1984, a total of 177 teletutorials were conducted from Toowoomba with an average of three centres hooked up on each occasion. Sound quality deteriorated with increased number of participating telephones. The number of participating centres was, therefore, never more than seven. The average cost of teletutorials is about fifty dollars.

Out of 1,243 Queensland students contacted in our 1984 survey, 70.6 per cent lived within thirty minutes drive of a study centre. This factor, and our policy of providing taped tutorials for students who live further away resulted in a cost-effective program for providing students with access to lecturers and academic problem solving.

Library

There is an underlying philosophy of the DDIAE that all instructional materials must be self-contained packages so as not to disadvantage students who cannot access the main campus or regional study centres. Rather than attempt to keep a large and current library collection in each study centre, all students are provided instead with books of readings and have access by mail to the Institute's main collection as well as reciprocal borrowing rights at most other tertiary institutions. This involves a great deal of institutional effort and expense in the copyright area, but students who do not have access to libraries are not thereby disadvantaged by this system. Consequently, study centre library collections are modest and consist mainly of reference books and study materials, and tapes of teletutorials.

Regional liaison officer (RLO) network

Although lecturing staff seldom visit study centres, the Institute has decentralised its student support system more than other distance education institutions with its regional liaison officer network. These twenty part-time Institute-appointed staff work mainly from home (although four are also employed at education or university centres), and maintain regular contact with local students by telephone. The officers are kept up-to-date on Institute happenings by a lengthy weekly memo from Outreach, and are able to answer more than half of the student enquiries immediately, saving the student a long-distance telephone call to the Institute. Regional liaison officers attend all telephone tutorials, maintain booking logs, give students basic training in the use of the loudspeaking telephones and microcomputers, encourage study groups and, twice yearly, conduct an extensive telephone survey.

Deans and external studies staff visit each region for orientation meetings in the first two weeks of the first semester; each new student is invited to these meetings by a telephone call from the officer. In some centres, pre-orientation meetings and graduation ceremonies are held, and the local officer helps on these occasions. Officers may assist in examination supervision but are paid separately for these extra duties. In some areas, the officer represents the Institute at careers days and consequently they are generally recognised in the local community as being knowledgeable about tertiary education. Officers are required to submit monthly regional reports and to participate in teleconferences for regional liaison officers. In addition, they visit the Toowoomba campus annually for a week-long intensive refresher seminar. Officers are not paid by the hour but are rather paid a base rate plus an amount per student per year.

In addition, the officers help to facilitate the following services to students.

> Printed study materials such as books or readings, computer-managed learning (CML) tests, slides, audio and videotapes, home-experiment kits, etc.

- Residential schools (optional in some areas, compulsory in others).

- Library service by mail.

- Academic advice by direct telephone consultation with lecturers and staff.

Computer-managed-learning (CML)

Seven study centres currently have Hitachi microcomputers for students to use CML material. By 1986 all other study centres will be similarily equipped. The CML project was initiated in 1983 and by 1986 over forty individual units will have CML components in their external study materials. Nearly all foundation subjects will have CML to give students the following benefits:

- immediate individualised feedback;

- a clearly defined pacing mechanism;

- early identification of learning problems and solutions.

In this CML system specific feedback based on diagnostic analyses of individual work is a major step towards helping students learn from home using a microcomputer. A recent survey shows that ten per cent of DDIAE students own or have a computer and an additional nineteen per cent have said they would like to buy one in the near future.

Residential schools

For most courses, students are asked to attend a compulsory residential school once a year. In the Bachelor of Business Course, although well attended voluntary residential schools are held every semester, only a few subjects demand compulsory attendance. Indeed students can complete some major strands in Business Studies without even coming in to the main campus.

CHALLENGES TO THE INSTITUTE'S CENTRE NETWORK

Access hours, installation and usage of microcomputers and the ever-increasing demand on loud-speaking telephones are three of the more obvious current challenges to the Institute's study centre network. Intrinsic to these is the need for greater coordination and cooperation between joint users of study centres and perhaps more fundamentally still, the effectiveness of study centre services must be measured and evaluated.

INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Study centre cooperation currently exists to the extent that these five institutions (University of Queensland, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, James Cook University of North Queensland, Brisbane College of Advanced Education) share facilities in different combinations in several

locations throughout the state. However, in only two locations, Mackay and Mt.Isa, are study centres shared by all five institutions. Cooperation, where it exists, takes the form of:

- shared personnel (part-time librarian, director, regional liaison officer, education centre staff and tutors);
- shared equipment (loud-speaking telephone, audio-visual equipment, computers, furniture);
- shared library and examination facilities;
- shared financial responsibility.

In 1983, Brisbane CAE, Capricornia and Darling Downs agreed to make regular financial contributions to the University of Queensland to support overhead costs in some University centres, but only six study centres are in fact shared by these four institutions.

The advent of AUSSAT has spurred on cooperative ventures and there is currently under discussion a pilot network which will provide satellite earth-stations to those same five institutions which have already established study centre networks.[4] Each institution has prepared detailed proposals, and these are under review by the State Government which will coordinate the entire project. The initial effect on study centres may be in the provision of teletutorials and on-line computer usage, forcing a much greater level of cooperation amongst institutions.

The question not yet addressed is one of cost-effectiveness. Does this extensive network of study centres actually improve a student's chance of success, or are we merely continuing the historical precedent set in 1949 by the University of Queensland? Evaluation of the individual services offered through study centres, and indeed the overall system, is a major challenge to all institutions and will undoubtedly lead to more enlighted provision of student support systems in the future.

As Store & Chick (1984. p,62) have summarised:

> It remains to be seen whether a tradition of collaboration at the regional level can be translated into the wider perspectives of national policy, but extensive practical experience in the field of co-operative decentralisation could prove to be the State's most valuable contribution to the emergence of a more comprehensive system.

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[4]See Castro, Juler & Smith (1985) and Lange (1985) for information on the Queensland proposal for the pilot network.

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Editorial acknowledgement

Dr. John Dekkers of the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education made a belated contribution but unfortunately it was not possible to include it in the chapter on Queensland because of the tight production schedule.

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Appendix 1.1 Study centres of Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education: location, student and staff number, facilities

Location	No. of external students (as at 1.9.86)	Location	Owned/ Rented/ Shared	No. of rooms used	Library facilities	No. of telephone tutorials in 1986	Access hours	Loud-speaking telephone	Computers	Satellite ground station	Regional liaison officers	Teletutorials	Meeting place	Library use	Exam	Other institutions sharing centre	Pre-orientation meeting	Orientation	Graduation
Brisbane	522	Griffith University	Rented	3	yes (Griffith Uni.)	77	Griffith hours	yes	HP 125, Hitachi	Access to BCAE or UQ	4	yes	yes	yes	no	Griffith	no	yes	no
Bundaberg	114	TAFE College	Shared	1	yes	48	6	yes	no	no	1	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no
Cairns	195	TAFE College	Shared	1	yes	33	36	yes	Hitachi	no	1	yes	yes	yes	yes	CIAE	no	yes	yes
Dalby	74	Education Centre	Rented	1	yes	35	30	yes	no	no	1	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
Emerald	65	(No formal centre)	-	-	-	-	-	no	no	no	1	no	no	no	no	-	no	yes	no
Gladstone	88	Education Centre	Rented	1	yes	41	30	yes	no	Access to CIAE	1	yes	yes	yes	yes	BCAE UQ	no	yes	no
Gold Coast	174	TAFE College	Shared	1	yes	48	53	yes	HP 3000 terminal Hitachi	no	1	yes	yes	yes	yes	BCAE CIAE UQ	yes	yes	yes
Ipswich	133	Education Centre	Rented	1	yes	46	40	yes	no	no	1	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	no
Mackay	153	Centre	Rented	1	yes	45	13	yes	Hitachi	no	1	yes	yes	yes	yes	BCAE CIAE UQ JCUMQ	yes	no	no
Maryborough	148	UQ centre	Rented	3	yes	35	10	yes	HP 125/ HP 3000 terminal, Hitachi	yes	1	yes	yes	yes	no	BCAE CIAE UQ	yes	yes	yes
Mt. Isa	77	Education Centre	Rented	1	yes	28	32	yes	no	no	1	yes	yes	yes	no	BCAE CIAE UQ JCUMQ	yes	yes	yes
Nambour	148	UQ centre	Rented	2	yes	38	14	yes	Hitachi	no	1	yes	yes	yes	no	BCAE CIAE UQ	yes	yes	yes
Redcliffe	77	Education	Rented Centre	2	yes	45	40	yes	Hitachi	no	1	yes	yes	yes	no	BCAE UQ			
Rockhampton	66	CIAE	Shared	1	yes (CIAE)	22	CIAE Open hours	yes	no	Access to CIAE	1	yes	yes	yes	yes	BCAE CIAE UQ	yes	no	no
Roma	55	(No formal centre)	-	-	no	-	-	no	no	no	1	no	-	no	no	-	yes	yes	yes
Toowoomba	483	Outreach DDIAE	Owned	2	yes	191	52	yes	Access to	yes all DDIAE computers	2 f/t	yes 2 Admin staff & 1 p/t clerk	DDIAE	yes	DDIAE campus	CIAE Campus	yes	yes	yes
Townsville	237	Education Centre	Rented	1	yes	40	40	yes	no	no	1	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
Warwick	44	Education Centre	Rented	1	yes	24	40	yes	no	no	1	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
Outside Qld	305																		

. Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education

. Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network (VTOCN)

Deakin offers courses from undergraduate to master's level, while the VTOCN courses range from hobby level to certificate level. The rest offer courses from associate diploma to undergraduate level.

The VTOCN is coordinated through the TAFE Off-Campus Coordinating Authority (TOCCA). TOCCA has responsibilities for course design, materials development, overall budgetting and planning policy, while individual TAFE colleges have resident responsibility for enrolment, course delivery and student support.

This chapter represents an analysis of the response to Victorian distance education by the two institutions situated in Geelong, 80 km west of Melbourne. These two institutions, Deakin University and the Gordon Technical College, have recently formed a cooperative working party on technology in education and work closely together in the development of services to distance education teachers and students.

What follows in this chapter is an account of the development of study centres by Deakin University, and an account of the development of the Gordon Technical College as one of the distance education centres of the VTOCN. The concluding section of the chapter is an indication of the sort of cooperation emerging between the two institutions, and the possible future such successful cooperation may have on Victorian distance education.

THE DEAKIN NETWORK

Deakin University was established in 1974 and is the youngest of the nineteen Australian universities. It is located at Waurn Ponds, some 8 km beyond the city centre of Geelong. It is the only university located outside the Melbourne metropolitan area and the only one in Victoria among whose objectives is to provide 'the opportunity for tertiary education at university level to all qualified persons whether within or outside Victoria by means of external study programmes.' (1974 Deakin University Act)

Deakin enrolled its first off-campus students in 1978 in its schools of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education. It introduced a new approach for developing courses in Australia by adopting the Open University model of course teams.

From the outset, Deakin University adhered closely to a philosophy of distance education as espoused by theorists like Bääth (1981) in that effective learning material for distance students should be able to stand alone without the supplementation of physical contacts between students and tutors. Course materials were produced principally in printed form, and audio-visual material and face-to-face contact in tutorials, residental schools and weekend seminars were seen as a valuable, though not essential,

Table 2.1 Deakin University: distribution of off-campus students as at 30 April 1985

Geelong (Victoria)		732
Melbourne (Victoria)		1592
Country Victoria		
Bairnsdale	8	
Ballarat	123	
Bendigo	105	
Castlemaine	26	
Colac	32	
Echuca	19	
Gippsland	97	
Hamilton	39	
Horsham	64	
Mansfield	9	
Mildura	48	
Portland	19	
Shepparton	134	
Wangaratta	73	
Warrnambool	48	844
Interstate		
Australian Capital Territory	133	
New South Wales		
Albury	69	
Sydney	248	
Others	135	
Northern Territory	63	
Queensland	162	
South Australia	150	
Tasmania	67	
Western Australia	80	1107
Overseas		94
		4369

The Centre boasts a number of tutorial and meeting rooms, a range of audio-visual equipment, photocopying facilities, and a full set of Deakin's off-campus materials. There is a full-time coordinator and part-time tutors are appointed each semester according to the requirements and numbers of students.

The Centre is available to other institutions, and an information service on Deakin courses and other educational opportunities is extensively used.

It is reasonable to conclude that the Melbourne Study Centre is successful and viable, if one accepts Gough's views about the provisions of an ideal study centre. It is not possible to draw the same conclusion about the centres that have been set up at other tertiary institutions. In figure 2.1 these centres can be seen at Bendigo, Ballarat, Warrnambool, Churchill and Albury.

Figure 2.1 Deakin University's study centres and access centres in 1984

Tertiary institutions at these locations are paid a sum related to the number of enrolled students and, in return, offer teaching space and equipment as required and access to the resident institution's library facilities by Deakin students. Deakin has also placed books and audio-visual materials in these libraries for loan. It is difficult to explain why these centres have not been successful. It could be because students do not like to enter and use an 'alien' institution, or host institutions are not motivated enough to be proactive in assisting Deakin students. Or, it could simply be that the number of students is too small to make an impact on the host institution.

Study centres shown in figure 2.1 at Horsham, Mildura, Wangaratta and Shepparton have been set up at the small continuing education centres in each of these towns. At these centres a sum is paid by Deakin, on the same basis as with other tertiary institutions, for use of space and for the housing of Deakin course material and audio-visual equipment. Library materials are housed in nearby public libraries because of lack of such facilities in the centres.

Again, because of insufficient student numbers in each location, these centres are not used for tutorials, but for private study using the resources available, for advice to prospective students and for examinations.

Figure 2.1 also shows the distribution of 'access centres' by Deakin. These centres were established in 1983 and took into account the pattern of activity experienced at study centres other than Melbourne. These centres are paid a flat amount and, in return, offer space as occasionally needed and house audio-visual equipment for use by students to view material borrowed from the Deakin

University Library. Additionally, the centres give advice and information to prospective students.

In conclusion, with the exception of the Melbourne Study Centre, centres have not been used for academic support purposes. Use of reference material and viewing of tapes have also not been as extensive as thought, due probably to the ease with which students can borrow books and tapes from the central library at the University.

The role of most Deakin study centres is now reduced to merely a reference centre for enquiries about enrolment or advice about administrative matters, and as a venue for staff to hold meetings with students in the area.

GORDON TECHNICAL COLLEGE/VTOCN

Gough (1980) defined a study centre as:

> a physical facility provided by an institution, normally at a location remote from the main campus, often using the facilities of another institution or organization and providing students of the remote institution access to facilities and services needed for their courses, but without the academic or administrative responsibility for those students passing fully either to the study centre or to the institution 'hosting' the centre'. (p.6)

It is in this sense of the term 'study centre' that the Deakin experience was cast.

The definition does not cover the VTOCN Off-Campus study centres at all since these centres have academic as well as administrative responsibility for their locally enrolled off-campus students.

The development of the VTOCN in 1976 meant that the School of External Studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology relinquished the responsibility of delivering the external studies courses it produced to the fifteen TAFE Colleges in which the new off-campus centres were established throughout Victoria.

The 'study centres' <u>were</u> the fifteen TAFE colleges, each college accepting full responsibility for the off-campus students it enrolled. These students have the same rights and privileges in regard to the use of college facilities and resources as any other student.

Figure 2.2 shows the location of each of these centres and the area each centre serves, and Table 2.2 shows the 1984 enrolment at each centre.

The off-campus study centres established at the fifteen TAFE colleges are the administrative centres from which all functions associated with the delivery of the VTOCN courses in the area are coordinated. Staffed by a full-time coordinator (appointed at senior teacher level) and clerical assistants (whose number is related to the enrolment level of the centre), each centre has developed according to the local needs of its students and the philosophy of the TAFE college in which they are located.

Figure 2.2 Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network

Table 2.2 VTOCN 1984 enrolments by centre

Ballarat	605
Bendigo	584
Box Hill	1,257
Footscray	1,174
Frankston	638
Gordon	1,267
Horsham	306
Preston	1,233
RMIT (Melbourne)	2,500
Sale	406
Shepparton	354
Sunraysia	337
Wangaratta	425
Warrnambool	446
Yallourn	460
Total	11,992

Centres enjoy a high level of autonomy but gain support through the liaison section of the VTOCN based in Melbourne at the VTOCN Coordinating Authority (located at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.)

Since 1976, these fifteen off-campus study centres, concentrating solely on delivery aspects of distance education, have implemented many initiatives aimed at providing greater support for their off-campus students.

The initiatives and functions of these centres are described below using the Gordon Technical College centre as a model.

The off-campus study centre at the Gordon Technology College is responsible for:

- counselling and enrolling students;
- supplying study materials to students;
- monitoring the movement and results of students' assignments;
- employing local tutors;
- monitoring students' progress;
- organising local workshops, seminars and tutorials;
- responding to student enquiries;
- promoting off-campus studies within the College and the community;
- advertising off-campus courses to the community at large and to specific interest groups;
- monitoring tutor performance;
- organising staff development activities for tutors and the off-campus staff;
- following the policies of the Gordon Technical College Administration and the VTOCN;
- ensuring appropriate resources are available within the College to support the off-campus programs.

The off-campus study centre at the Gordon Technical College is the largest outside the Melbourne metropolitan area and serves the Geelong region. Geelong, with a population of 177,000, is a mainly industrial town with a strong need for courses such as those offered through the VTOCN. Between seventy and eighty per cent of its off-campus students live within 20 km of the campus.

The centre has developed in line with VTOCN policy of open access and local support but, due to the characteristics of the area and the influence of the Gordon Technical College, greater emphasis has been placed on encouraging more personal contact with students. The other underlying principle that has been followed since 1976 is that of integration. From the outset the Gordon has regarded the off-campus programs as being an integral part of the total College curriculum.

Additionally, like Deakin's Melbourne Study Centre, the Gordon's off-campus centre is located adjacent to Geelong's central business district, with good parking facilities and 24 hour telephone service.

By being part of the Gordon Technical College, off-campus students have access to all facilities normally enjoyed by full-time students, such as counselling, learning resources, the use of computers etc.

The off-campus centre initiates and organises:

- the recruitment of local tutors as the subject enrolments warrant;
- regular staff development activities for these tutors;
- orientation meetings for students and tutors;
- production and distribution of a local off-campus student newsletter;
- production of a local off-campus student manual;
- introductory letters and advice from tutors;
- student surveys; and
- enrolment counselling and course advising.

Finally, the Centre has encouraged integration of off-campus students into the total College teaching program. This is manifest by on-campus students' use of study materials designed for off-campus students, by off-campus students enrolling in some on-campus classes, and administrative integration into the support services of the College and its committee structure.

It only remains to be observed that, although there are variations between the fifteen centres of the VTOCN, in general the study centres provide a very substantial array of services to their off-campus students. The off-campus study centre at the Gordon Technical College has been active and innovative over the years but its activity pattern is not significantly different from the other study centres in what is a very sophisticated and effective network.

COOPERATION AND A POSSIBLE EMERGING FUTURE

In 1984 Deakin University and the Gordon Technical College set up a Joint Working Party on the New Technologies in Education, more succinctly called 'The Deakin-Gordon Projects'. Under the co-convenorship of Peter Smith, Head of the Learning Resource Centre at the Gordon, and Paul Northcott, Chairman of Deakin's Distance Education Unit, this group has responsibilities to investigate and recommend possible joint applications of the new technologies in education.

During 1984, staff from TOCCA had been examining the same issues and there was considerable discussion between TOCCA staff and the Deakin-Gordon group. What clearly emerged from these discussions was that there was a considerably common view between the groups on which technologies were likely to be most effective, and how they may be accessed by distance education students in Victoria.

Early in 1985 the Deakin-Gordon group hosted a convention on Telecommunications Networking in Education, at the invitation of the Victorian coordinator and chairman of the National Working Party on Telecommunications for Tertiary Education, Dr. Bill Carroll. The opportunity was

present, therefore, to make a major input to the convention and, in turn, to the National Working Party.

Accordingly, Alan McLay of TOCCA and Peter Smith, Nguyen Tran and Iain Wallace of the Deakin-Gordon group prepared a proposal for Victoria to go before the Convention.[2]

That proposal suggested a number of cornerstones in the development of study centre networks.

1 A cooperative study centre network in which the centres, while still having the traditional roles discussed earlier in this chapter, should also be seen as telecommunications nodes.

2 That these nodes should be available to all distance education institutions participating in the network and to all off-campus students of these institutions.

3 That there would be value in considering the TAFE colleges that form the VTOCN as the geographical sites for the nodes (see figure 2.2). While that proposal does not prevent institutions from locating their study centres at other sites, such as the Community Education Centres used frequently by Deakin, the VTOCN member colleges form a realistic base for administration and maintenance, and afford security over hardware and software.

The McLay, Smith, Tran and Wallace scenario proposed three basic levels to the system with the attendant characteristics as follows, defined in user terms:

Level 1 Resource base

- CAI/CML software
- computer(s)
- computer network access
- data banks
- common videotex information provider
- access via AUSSAT
- TV/radio transmit/receive
- word processing/electronic mail/facsimile
- access to library information services
- telephone and conferencing bridge

Level 2 Resource and communication node

- computer
- computer network access
- storage facilities
- common videotex receive status
- access to AUSSAT
- word processing/electronic mail/facsimile
- radio/TV reception
- audio/video cassette recording, copying, and playback facilities
- on-line and offset printing

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[2]See Smith (1985).

Level 3 Sub-node or individual user

- personal computer
- audio/video cassette replay
- TV/radio reception
- telephone

In the model proposed, level 1 status will be available to any participating institution. Node, or level 2 status, will be available at study centres with the hardware, software and staff, perhaps located at the VTOCN Colleges. Additionally, any level 1 site could also, of course, be a level 2 site. Level 3 sites would be sub-nodes either in smaller centres or even in student homes.

The proposal for Victoria opens the way for several major developments to occur in the study centre network:

- it enables the further development of study centres which are widely spread throughout Victoria (see figures 2.1 and 2.2) and common to all distance education students;

- it enables the accessing of a very wide range of learning resources by distance education students;

- it enables and encourages the cooperative development of learning resources between institutions, and shared across the network by institutions and their students;

- it enables study centres to be collectively large enough to warrant full-time staff providing services to students, to institutions, and to the telecommunications network;

- it enables use of the collective learning resources by on-campus students and staff at each institution;

- it enables access to the resource by community groups.

Before such a proposal can be implemented it must be translated into precise technical specificiations. That is the simple task. The greater amount of work lies in the areas of:

- cooperation between users;

- funding;

- legal issues of network ownership, responsibilities, copyright;

- State/Federal relationships; and

- management of the network.

These are difficult problems, especially since any Victorian network must obviously be congruent with a national network. They are however soluble problems. It is an exciting and a feasible proposition that has been approved in principal by the delegates at the convention to which it was presented. It remains to be seen if it can survive the rocky road ahead.

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Acknowledgement from authors

The ideas and suggestions in this chapter are not all our own work. They have been developed over a period of months. We, therefore, acknowledge input from Deakin University staff, Gordon Technical College staff, and TAFE Off-Campus Coordinating Authority staff who have listened, commented and assisted.

Chapter 3 Northern Territory

The educational brokering role of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre

Kevin T. Livingston

ABSTRACT

Federal and state politics have dictated the development and provision of higher education in the Northern Territory. While the Northern Territory External Studies Centre was very much an outcome of political compromises, its growth and role as an educational broker have taken on national significance because it has been able to fill gaps in institutional and student needs.

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY AND EDUCATION AT A DISTANCE

The Northern Territory is generally regarded by the rest of Australia as a frontier region which can be largely ignored. With a population of only 134,000 people scattered over 1,346,000 sq. km, the Territory aspires to becoming Australia's seventh state and yet struggles to be taken seriously by the rest of the country. It is still seen as a remote, rather exotic part of Australia, peopled mainly by Aborigines and rugged European Australians (individualists living on cattle stations and in mining towns). Remoteness from the rest of Australia is indeed a characteristic of the Territory. Darwin, its largest city where almost half the population lives, is over 2,500 km from Adelaide, the nearest state capital.

Yet, the Territory's frontier image is more a legacy of the past than of the present. Darwin at the Top End with a population of 63,000 is a typical suburban Australian city, though more tropical and cosmopolitan than any other urban centre in Australia. The Territory also has a larger and more visible Aboriginal population (twenty-five per cent of the total). Territorians are more conscious of their proximity to South-east Asia than their counterparts in the Australian states. Nevertheless, these characteristics reflect major contemporary developments in the whole of Australian society, which is becoming more aware of its Aboriginal people and of its place in the Asian-Pacific region.

One feature of its recent history and experience which Territory society can claim is distinctive, and worth sharing with others, is its reliance on distance education. The Northern Territory's scattered population and its area (twice that of Texas in the USA), together with its geographical remoteness from the rest of Australia, have marked it out as a most appropriate region for delivering education at a distance. At the level of

primary schooling, the Territory is famed internationally for its two Schools of the Air - one operating from Alice Springs in the Centre (since 1951), the other from Katherine towards the Top End (since 1966). These decentralised Schools of the Air have been unique in Australia, combining correspondence teaching with two-way high-frequency radio communications to children living on cattle stations, mining camps and other isolated communities. The Northern Territory Secondary Correspondence School in Darwin also provides courses to matriculation level for adult students and for children of high-school age in the bush. Thus, the Northern Territory Education Department is providing education at a distance to over 750 students at primary and secondary levels.

In 1985, there are certainly more than 750 external students at the tertiary level. There are now approximately 1,300 enrolled in various post-secondary institutions; 800 of these are with twenty-five interstate universities and colleges or institutes of advanced education, and 500 with eight interstate technical and further education (TAFE) colleges. A further 120 external tertiary students are enrolled with the Territory's only tertiary institution, the Darwin Institute of Technology, which provides mainly campus-based courses to 1,200 students at the advanced education level as well as to 2,600 students at the TAFE level. This Institute was formerly known as the Darwin Community College, which was established in 1974; the change of name taking place only in March 1985. The above student figures reflect two of the distinctive characteristics of higher education in the Northern Territory over the ten years since the setting up of this multi-level advanced education/TAFE institution in Darwin and the later separation of the TAFE-level Community College of Central Australia in the Territory's second largest town, Alice Springs.

- The first is its continuing and growing dependence on interstate universities and advanced colleges to provide a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate external courses to Territory residents.

- The second is the lack of a university offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the Northern Territory.

THE POLITICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISION

Reference to a university immediately raises a more distinctive feature of the recent history of higher education in the Northern Territory: the continuing intervention of governments (both the Australian Federal Government and the Northern Territory Government) and government authorities such as the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC), a statutory authority of the Federal Government. Major policy differences between Territory and Federal authorities have led to on-going tensions over the development of higher education, and especially of the proposed university in the Northern Territory. The political context of higher education in the Territory is largely responsible for the creation of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre which is the subject of this case study. Given that political

factors impinge directly on this and other centres in Australia, this case study should be of interest not only to distance educators but also to people who want to know more about the impact of Australian politics on education.

Federal-State relations and conflict between the Federal Government and State Governments and their statutory authorities have been central to Australia's political, economic and industrial life. The same can be said of education, especially tertiary and higher education since the 1960s, which have generally involved continuing conflicts between Federal and State authorities, exacerbated by rivalries between the three major sectors (university, advanced education, and technical and further education). Tertiary education in the Northern Territory has been vulnerable to Federal-State (or in this case Federal-Territory) conflict since 1978, when the Territory gained self-government from the Federal Government in Canberra. Attacking 'Canberra' has proved to be electorally successful for its politicians. Paul Everingham, the first Chief Minister of the Northern Territory from 1978 to 1984 and subsequently its elected member in the Federal Parliament since December 1984, has been the most vigorous proponent of this confrontationist approach towards successive Federal Governments.

When Everingham's Country-Liberal Party Government in the Northern Territory first proposed a university for the Northern Territory in 1980, the agenda was set for Federal-Territory tensions during the 1980s over the development of higher education. A University Planning Authority, which was set up as a statutory authority within the Department of Education, in December 1980 prepared the first major submission for the Federal Government's approval of a new, separate traditional university which would offer undergraduate courses (mostly excised from the then Darwin Community College's Advanced Education degree courses) and research/postgraduate activities. Earlier proposals which had emphasised that the new university should use distance education approaches and contract extensively with established Australian distance-teaching universities were not taken up in the final submission (Eedle 1983).

The response of Malcolm Fraser's Federal (Liberal-Country Party) Government in June 1981 to this first university proposal was generally negative. It accepted the advice of CTEC (1981) that the population of the Territory could not maintain such a university - a predictable reaction at a time when there was a policy of government cutbacks in expenditure on higher education - and also CTEC's recommendations for the 1982-84 triennium that the development of higher education should continue to be through the Darwin Community College, now the Darwin Institute of Technology, which offers degrees in Business, Education, Arts and Fine Arts.[1]

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[1]This was accepted again in 1984 by Bob Hawke's Federal (Labor) Government for the 1985-87 triennium.

In one of the more positive initiatives designed to improve access to higher education in the Northern Territory, CTEC recommended that additional funding should be provided to Darwin Community College 'to coordinate and assist external studies enrolments in other courses of higher education' (CTEC 1981, p.32). The Commission correctly noted that there was a significant pool of current and potential external students in the Territory and that the College had always provided such assistance to local external students of interstate universities and colleges. The CTEC Report and the funds subsequently allocated for 1982-84 ($410,000) and 1985-87 ($660,000) thus provided an opportunity for re-thinking the most appropriate range of services which could be offered by a regional centre within an existing tertiary institution. Thus was born what came to be the known in late 1982 and early 1983 as the Northern Territory External Studies Centre.

At the same time, CTEC recommended that the 'most appropriate initiative' which could be taken to facilitate university-level research in the Northern Territory was through the existing North Australia Research Unit (NARU),[2] now located beside the campus of the Darwin Institute of Technology (CTEC 1981, p.34).

It would be an understatement to record that the Northern Territory Government and its University Planning Authority did not greet these responses from the Federal Government with any enthusiasm. The Northern Territory External Studies Centre and the proposal regarding NARU's role in university research were seen as poor consolation prizes for the sinking of their proposed Northern Territory university.

There is some irony in CTEC's expression of enthusiasm regarding the expanded provision for external studies in the Territory, since their policy on external studies elsewhere in Australia during the 1980s was to call a halt to expansion, and demand greater coordination across States and institutions within the three sectors. While this coordinating policy is widely regarded as long overdue, the doubts that CTEC has expressed about the capacity of distance teaching institutions to meet the needs of groups besides mature-age students is a matter for debate (CTEC 1984, pp.43-44, Anwyl 1984). This is, however, not the place to elaborate on the current inconsistencies in the policies of CTEC on tertiary external studies.

The future development of higher education in the Northern Territory, and in particular the question of what kind of university should be set up and when are again in the melting pot for the 1985-87 triennium. The Territory Government's over-zealous intervention in early 1985, by re-organising higher education and directly appointing a Director to the re-named Darwin Institute of Technology, has ensured that higher education will remain on the

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[2]This Unit is part of the Australian National University, which is situated in Canberra in The Australian Capital Territory.

political agenda for some time. It is therefore important to draw attention to the political circumstances surrounding the origin of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre. The genesis, the early years and the future of this regional Centre - like some of its counterparts in the Australian States - cannot be divorced from the context of Federal-State educational politics. The remainder of this case study will consist of an analysis of the policies and operations of this Northern Territory Centre from early 1983 to early 1985.

POLICIES AND SERVICES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY EXTERNAL STUDIES CENTRE

CTEC's proposal for the Northern Territory External Studies Centre, dedicated to liaison with interstate universities and advanced colleges and located within the Darwin Community College, was made in June 1981 (CTEC 1981). Funding for the Centre did not become available until late 1982.

When the Centre commenced in 1983, the decision was made to keep it separate from the Darwin Community College's own External Studies Unit which was responsible for producing and administering the external program of the College. Thus the new Centre has been able to concentrate on support services for potential and current students enrolled with interstate universities but residing in the Territory.

The Centre frequently consults all universities and advanced colleges already providing, or planning to provide, external studies courses (undergraduate and postgraduate) to Northern Territory residents. In March 1983 letters and survey questionnaires were sent to all interstate tertiary external providers outlining the Centre's proposed services and seeking their responses on the Centre's priorities. (For a summary of responses to part two of this questionnaire, see appendix 3.1) These contacts by mail have been consolidated by annual personal visits of Centre staff to tertiary institutions in all states. As a result, the Centre has now established its profile among Australian tertiary distance education institutions.

Over thirty interstate tertiary institutions provide their course and enrolment information to the Centre and make use of its staff in the two offices in Darwin and Alice Springs as their local contacts or agents for a wide range of general and special services. The Centre's two basic services are:

- to provide course and enrolment information to prospective students; and

- to offer support to any enrolled students and their institutions wishing to make use of its services, e.g. access to library, teletutorials, teleconferences, computing.

While special contractual arrangements have been negotiated with many interstate institutions, the Centre's experience is that it must also be able to respond to

requests from individuals seeking to study or already studying a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Indeed, the Centre regards it as crucial to its operations to individualise its services. If it cannot refer a client to an appropriate tutor or professional person, it will try to locate such expertise. The external student is invited to complete a form at the beginning of each academic year detailing any anticipated needs and he or she is encouraged to discuss other unanticipated problems with the Centre as often as possible.[3]

LOCATION, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

The resources and functions of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre are detailed in appendices 3.2 and 3.3. The Centre's main office is in Darwin, located within the School of Extension Services at the Darwin Institute of Techonology. The Head of the School of Extension Services has overall responsibility for policy and budgetary planning and for general liaison with interstate institutions and higher education authorities at the Federal and Territory levels. The Coordinator of the Centre, who is located in the Darwin office, is also involved in policy formulation and liaison with other higher education institutions and is directly responsible for coordinating the Centre's services for the whole of the Northern Territory, through the two main offices in Darwin and Alice Springs. In other towns such as Nhulunbuy, the mining town on the Gove Peninsula, TAFE adult educators act as agents for the Centre in providing information or advice to prospective or current students.

The Alice Springs office, which opened in November 1984, is located at the Community College of Central Australia, where the coordinator is employed as a half-time lecturer by the Darwin Institute of Technology to replicate the services offered in Darwin. From 1983 to early 1985, the Centre's Nhulunbuy office was part of the Institute's Nhulunbuy Annexe, where the full-time coordinator's duties included providing services to prospective and current external students. In February 1985 when the Darwin Institute's Annexe closed, these services were transferred to the Nhulunbuy TAFE Centre.

Figure 3.1 shows the location of Darwin, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory, as well as the capital cities of the other states.

As appendix 3.2 shows, the Centre's policy is to limit the number of full-time staff and to use its funds for support services, including library services and tutorials for individuals and groups through a network of paid part-time tutors contracted to the Centre. In addition to the Head of the School of Extension Services who is responsible for overall planning and budgetary policies (not listed in the staff data of appendix 3.2), there are three full-time staff in Darwin: a coordinator (senior lecturer), a

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[3]Individualised student support is discussed in Sewart (1982) and Walker (1982).

lecturer and an administrative assistant. The remaining staff, including the examinations officer in Darwin, are all employed on a part-time basis. More detailed information about the staff and the physical resources of the Centre's offices are provided in appendix 3.2. Data on the main functions of the Centre's offices and staff, and its clients' usage of its services can be found in appendix 3.3.

Figure 3.1: The Northern Territory External Studies Centre and locations of offices at Darwin, Alice Springs, and Nhulunbuy

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One of the major policy and operational decisions made by the Centre staff from the beginning was to regard the whole of the Northern Territory, and not simply Darwin and its environs, as the Centre's region or catchment area. The location of the Centre's headquarters in the Darwin Institute of Technology naturally meant that its services are accessible to most of the Darwin residents. Yet from the beginning, staff received enquiries from students and prospective students residing in all parts of the Territory. There was a deliberate decision to make use of various media to communicate with their clients and with staff located at interstate campuses. These media included correspondence, mailing packages, the telephone, teleconferences (via telephone and the ATS-1 satellite) as well as face-to-face meetings, interviews, tutorials and residential workshops. Centre staff accepted that since they were involved in liaising with distant institutions and operating within distance education systems, they should make extensive use of distance education principles and methods for the range of activities in which the Centre was involved.

These activities embraced the following:

- Providing information and counselling to prospective students.

- Referring clients to other resources and other professional people.

- Communicating with interstate institutions about administrative and academic matters brought to the attention of the Centre by their Northern Territory-based students.

- Arranging orientation meetings, teleconferences and teletutorials conducted for Northern Territory students by local consultants and interstate staff.

- Providing study skills advice and information to new students.

- Facilitating access to library resources, including setting up loan procedures from the Darwin Institute for remote students.

- Arranging for students to meet with local tutors and local supervisors.

- Organising residential schools scheduled to be held in Darwin and conducted by visiting staff of host institutions. The Centre can engage local consultants to help run seminars at those schools.

- Administering and supervising examinations on behalf of other institutions.

Requests for all of these services were generally initiated by telephone or letter. Responses were also generally made by telephone and correspondence. Very often it was difficult, if not impossible, for the clients to visit the Centre in person. In such cases, the whole of the communication and the provision of services were at a distance. In other cases, the initial contact via mail or telephone was followed up by face-to-face contact with the full-time staff or one of the part-time tutors or resource persons. This did not necessarily imply a visit to the Centre's office since the student-tutor meeting could take place at another venue more convenient to both parties. It is, therefore, a mistaken view to see this regional centre as simply providing a venue for students to make face-to-face contact with others.

THE MODEL OF AN EDUCATIONAL BROKER WITHIN AN INSTITUTION

From the information provided already it should be obvious that the Northern Territory Centre, although located within an existing tertiary institution, belongs to the multi-institutional, educational broker model of a regional centre. It does not represent, nor is it aligned exclusively with, any single distance-teaching institution. This can be claimed despite its location within the Darwin Institute of Technology, which has a comparatively small number of its own external students

(about 120 out of a total enrolment of about 1,200 enrolled in advanced education courses, mainly part-time adults).

The Northern Territory Centre is therefore in a position to operate as an educational broker between the Darwin Institute of Technology and other tertiary institutions. The Centre draws on the resources and expertise available in the Institute's library and computer centre, as well as staff in its academic and administrative departments. In most cases, the Centre pays individual staff and departments for providing these services, which are beyond their normal duties and commitments. This is especially the case with special services such as tutorial assistance, local residential workshops, literature searches and special administrative support for external students of other tertiary institutions. In the case of tutors, contracts are drawn up by the Centre after initial consultations with tutors. These contracts specify the number of hours (ranging from one hour to twelve hours), rate of pay, and method of payment (on presentation of invoices by tutors). It is worth noting that the majority of these tutorial sessions are for individual students.

The Centre has to date negotiated special contractual arrangements with the following interstate universities and advanced colleges involved in providing external studies to Northern Territory residents:

1 The University of Queensland, which from the beginning has recognised the Centre as its regional centre in the Northern Territory and the Centre Coordinator as its officer-in-charge. Some funding is provided by the University each year for the Centre to provide additional administrative and tutorial services to the University's external students.

2 Deakin University (Victoria), which invited the Centre in 1984 to become an access centre and has provided funds for the Centre to help with course information dissemination and application forms distribution for prospective Deakin students, and to facilitate tutorials and study groups for Deakin students.

3 Murdoch University (Western Australia), which includes the Centre in its publications as a centre for its Northern Territory external students and is currently negotiating to conduct a week-long residential school in Darwin for external students enrolled in its graduate program in enviromental science.

4 Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education (New South Wales), for which the Centre has organised residential schools, workshops and field study visits in 1983 and 1984 (including providing venues, administrative support and local consultants) for external students in undergraduate and graduate programs - such as Park Management, Library and Information Science. The Centre also acts an an agent for the Institute's continuing education courses available by external study.

5 Armidale CAE (New South Wales), which together with the Northern Territory Education Department, collaborated with the Centre in organising in-service workshops and residential schools in Darwin for their external students enrolled in graduate programs in Multicultural Studies and Aboriginal Studies.

6 South Australian College of Advanced Education, for which the Centre provides teletutorial facilities and administrative support for Darwin-based external students taking several undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

7 Western Australian Institute of Technology, which has assisted in coordinating the Australia-wide Tertiary Distance Education (TDE) Network on the KANGAROO Satellite Network on ATS-1, also makes use of the Darwin and Alice Springs centres for telephone and satellite teletutorials for its external students.

8 Western Australian College of Advanced Education, which uses the Centre as a venue for visiting staff to meet their external students in Darwin and Alice Springs.

9 Queensland Institute of Technology, School of Law (Queensland), for which the Centre facilitates their external law students' access to teletutorials and local weekly tutorials.

10 Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (Queensland), with which a contract has been negotiated for the Centre to act as an agent for their continuing education available by external study, and with which arrangements have been made to assist in conducting residential schools and teletutorials at the Darwin Institute of Technology for their external students.

11 Brisbane College of Advanced Education (at Kelvin Grove, Queensland), which uses the Centre's teletutorial facilities.

ROLE AS AN INFORMATION AND ACCESS CENTRE

When CTEC recommended the establishment of the Centre in 1981 a major objective was seen as providing Northern Territory residents with greater access to higher education courses not available locally. The provision of course information and the application procedures and subsequent admission to interstate institutions were given a high priority, though not as high as the provision of services to external students already enrolled.

The Centre's experience during its first two years has been that provision of information and advice about admission to courses, postgraduate and undergraduate, accounts for more of the Centre staff's time than any of the other demands made upon its services. Appendix 3.3 shows the pattern of usage of the Centre's services and it illustrates the huge demand for these information services - over 1,500 serious enquiries in 1983-84.

Centre staff also act as counsellors for people choosing between different distance education institutions and systems which are often competing for students. This is another aspect of the Centre's developing role as an educational broker between local authorities or individuals and interstate tertiary institutions. This role ensures that the Centre exercises some influence on the enrolment patterns of distance education institutions. This is accentuated in the Northern Territory where there is no equivalent of the State Tertiary Admission Centres shared by most universities and colleges in all Australian states (except Tasmania). The Centre in some ways has to take on the role of an impartial admissions centre and at the same time a resource centre for information on external studies courses and systems that meet the needs of its clientele. An important consequence of this phenomenon is that the centre needs to be able to access up-to-date information on tertiary external courses available Australia-wide. At the same time staff in this Centre and in study centres all over Australia need special counselling skills. This is an important aspect of staff development in distance education that is often overlooked.

The Centre has developed a wide range of contacts with the Tertiary Admission Centres as well as with the tertiary providers in all states. While most of its clients are people already in the workforce, a growing number of recent school leavers and their parents also make some use of the Centre's resources and expertise. In this area, the Centre refers many of its clients to career guidance counsellors and to staff in Commonwealth-funded centres, such as the Career Reference Centre in Darwin. Since the Centre is already well informed about admission procedures Australia-wide, and since off-campus applicants follow the same procedures as on-campus in most states, it is under some pressure to develop further its services in this direction. Obviously, serious consideration has to be given to the implications of such a development. Further staff and resources will be required if such information and admission services are to be expanded.

USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Centre has taken some initiatives in the educational use of telecommunications for administrative support, teletutorials and staff development activities. The Centre coordinated the Tertiary Distance Education Network of twenty tertiary member institutions using the American Applications Technology 1 Satellite (ATS-1). In 1984, teleconferences were conducted weekly for staff from many institutions on technology, distance education and administration. Some tutorials were also conducted by staff of interstate institutions for external students.[4] The demise of the ATS-1 for Australian

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[4]The author, as the chief organiser of seminars and coordinator of the Network, has a full set of records and reports on the activities of the Network. He will be preparing a full paper on this network in the projected Deakin Open Education Monograph no. 2 to be published in early 1986.

terminals since March 1985 has meant that the Centre now relies on the Telecom Australia telephone network for its teletutorials and teleconferences.

The Coordinator also represents the Northern Territory on the National Working Party on Telecommunications in Tertiary Education formed in July 1984 under the chairmanship of Dr. Bill Carroll of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The Centre is an institutional member of SATUSERS, the association of small users of the Australian Domestic Satellite, AUSSAT. Given the Centre's links with tertiary institutions in all Australian states, it places a high priority on joining the proposed national tertiary telecommunications network which is planned to begin operating on AUSSAT in early 1986.

A MODEL FOR THE OTHER AUSTRALIAN STATES?

This case study may serve as an interesting example of a new regional centre which could provide a model for other parts of Australia - especially when there is more networking of tertiary centres and institutions nationally.

It can be argued that the Centre has been able to establish an identity and develop most of the characteristics which Gough regarded as essential in what he termed 'the ideal study centre'.

- A visible and identifiable centre, even if located in another institution.
- A cooperative undertaking, liaising with a range of institutions, nationally and locally.
- Staff primarily responsible for the centre.
- Adequate financial support with a total budget, including utilities.
- Accommodation for offices and access to tutorial rooms for external students.
- A high priority given to the provision of information and advice on admission to tertiary courses.
- Facilitating access to local libraries.
- Local part-time tutors, representing a potentially valuable staff resource both for tutoring and academic counselling.

(Gough 1980, pp.45-7)

It can be argued that the Centre is a hastily conceived offspring of Federal versus State politicking in education, an aberration of the Top End. It could be nipped in the bud or be subsumed in the proposed University of the Northern Territory, to which it certainly owes its origin. But no matter what may happen in the near future, it has provided an indication about possible development trends for Australian distance education as a whole.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY EXPERIENCE

The widespread representation of almost all Australian distance-teaching institutions in the Northern Territory, and the Territory's remoteness from the rest of Australia present major challenges to Australian tertiary distance education providers. Having to deliver their programs at great distance raises questions about their distance-teaching systems. Issues to be faced include:

- the place of compulsory residential schools at host institutions (interstate) versus providing for workshops held locally;
- the use of local tutors to assist individuals as well as groups;
- funding support for library services on which students make such big demands locally; and
- making the most imaginative and economic use of telecommunications technology to facilitate interaction with the remote student.

CTEC funds allow for some support in these areas, but there are limitations. To expect the Northern Territory External Studies Centre to become more involved as a provider of courses - through contractual arrangements as CTEC is recommending (CTEC 1984) - appears to be beyond its present resources.

GENERAL VERSUS SPECIAL PROVIDERS

From the Northern Territory perspective, some reasonable coordination of external course provision is to be welcomed if it leads to greater access for Northern Territory residents. At present, many institutions offering external programs which are of potential national interest appear to make it difficult, if not impossible, for students living interstate or in comparatively remote locations, such as the Northern Territory, to enrol in and study their courses. To be identified as a special provider of a particular course should not preclude an institution being able to deliver that program nationally. Too often specialised courses offered by universities and advanced colleges are limited to geographical areas, generally within their own state boundaries.

Centralisation versus decentralisation

There is some concern abroad that new developments, such as CTEC's national external studies coordinating committee and the challenges presented by new post-AUSSAT telecommunications networks, will foster greater centralisation in the distance education field. There is a need to avoid being defensive and over-cautious in responding to these new challenges. The role of regional centres in these new enviroments should be looked at

carefully. Experience in the Northern Territory suggests that any centralisation of resources must be balanced by provision for decentralised information and support services through regional and local centres and liaison staff.

A NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Current and prospective tertiary students in the Northern Teritory obviously need the interstate external providers. Interstate tertiary institutions may be tempted to think that they do not need the Northern Territory with its comparatively small number of students. They may be tempted to think that they do not need regional centres such as the Northern Territory External Studies Centre. It is this author's contention that as we move into the exciting period that lies ahead - especially after AUSSAT is launched - we will all need one another if we are going to meet the challenges of greater participation, greater access and greater equity in providing education at a distance for all Australians.

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Appendix 3.1: Questionnaire of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre sent to other Australian post-secondary educational institutions

A questionnaire in two parts was sent out to twenty-two heads of external studies units in Australian post-secondary institutions in March and April 1983. Part one (in four pages) contained nine questions seeking information on the institution's own distance-education system and programs of study. Part two (one page only) invited respondents to rank the services they thought the centre should provide.

Twenty-one responses were received, although three did not complete part two. Eighteen completed part two but three did not list services in any priority.

The table below summarises the responses received for various services required. The numbers indicate that this particular service was included within the first four priorities.

Indicate in order or priority (1,2,3, etc.) in the list below the services which you consider the Northern Territory External Studies Centre should offer for the external students.

10	Pre-enrolment information and advice on your courses and programmes.
6	Orientation for external study techniques for new external students.
4	Counselling for new external students.
12	Examination and investigation services.
14	Library services.
1	Computer services.
3	Study centres equipped with audiovisual facilities.
2	Local tutorials drawing on teaching expertise available in local communities (in the Northern Territory).
1	Telephone tutorials (or satellite-delivered teletutorials) conducted by your teaching staff.
0	Visits to N.T. Centres by your teaching staff to conduct tutorials and residential workshops.
2	The formation of self-help study groups among your N.T. external students.

While some respondents commented that it was difficult to rank the listed services, the majority did not place as high a priority on staff visits, local tutorials and self-help groups (which the Open University in Britain is very concerned with) as on the role of the Centre in providing information and counselling services.

Appendix 3.2: Locations, staffing, resources of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre, 1983-85

LOCATIONS	DARWIN	ALICE SPRINGS	NHULUNBUY
Distances by air in km			
From Melbourne	4,228	1,959	3,863
Sydney	3,327	2,022	3,234
Perth	3,285	1,980	3,933
Brisbane	2,852	1,966	2,487
Adelaide	2,652	1,316	3,300
Total population estimation in June 1983 133,876	(Including Palmerston) 62,899	20,681	3,855
Northern Territory staffing	Full-time: Coordinator; Lecturer, Admin. Asst. Part-time: Exam Officer Part-time tutors (30)	Coordinator; (1/2 Lecturer). Part-time tutors being engaged	83-85 Coordinator; Admin. Asst. (with other duties) 85: Adult Education (Pt)
Accommodation	Separate offices (2) with reception area in School of Extension Services, Darwin Institute; access to seminar rooms (2); teleconferencing studios. Moved to larger premises (3 offices; meeting room and teleconferencing studio) in March 1985. Near former location at Casuarina Campus.	Separate office with access & seminar/meeting rooms (2) Anzac Hill Campus, Community College. Moving to new campus (Sadadeen) during 1985.	1983-85: Office and meeting room of the former Darwin Community College Annexe. Feb. 85: services through new TAFE Centre.
Library facilities	Access and usual borrowing rights from Institute Library (on evidence of interstate enrolment). Literature search for postgrad. students.	Access and borrowing rights from Community College Library. Mail service from Darwin Institute.	Microfiche catalogue and mail service from Darwin Institute Library. Small Centre holdings.
Telecommunications audio-visual	Transit loud-speaking telephone ATS-1 satellite terminal & studio After hours recorder-phone	Transit loud-speaking telephone - for teleconferences and tutorials	After hours recorder-phone
Computer facilities	24-hr access to VAX at Institute. Access other times to 2 rooms of micros	Access to Community College terminals	Access through local school
Opening hours	8.00am - 6.00pm Feb.-March (& later for tutorials). Normal office hours 8.00am - 4.20pm	Office opens 20 hours per week: include after hours and Saturday 8-11 am	Normal office hours: after hours by arrangement

Appendix 3.3: Functions and uses of services of the Northern Territory External Studies Centre, 1983-85

FUNCTIONS	DARWIN (Jan. 83 - Feb. 85)		ALICE SPRINGS (Nov. 84 - Feb. 85)	NHULUNBUY (May 83 - Feb. 85)
Information	Yes		Yes	Yes
Counselling	Yes		Yes	Yes
Meetings/ Orientations	Yes		Yes	Yes
Administration	Yes		Yes	Yes
Tutorials	Yes		Yes	-
Teleconferences/ Tutorials	Yes		Yes	-
Residential schools	Yes		-	-
Examinations	Yes	(Community College services)		Yes
Number of institutions using Centre for examinations			(Community College in Alice Springs serves TAFE institutions & students and provides all exam supervision)	
Universities	8			4
Advanced Colleges	16			8
TAFE & others	8			4
Course information				
Universities	8		8	8
Advanced Colleges	20		20	20
TAFE colleges	5		-	5
General services				
Universities	8		5	4
Advanced Colleges	15		10	8
TAFE colleges	6		-	6
Special services (e.g. residential; schools; designated centre)	10		6	3
Number of prospective students seeking information	(1983-84)	474	-	190
	(1984-85)	750	60	110
Enrolled students using/attending				
. Orientation meetings:	120		40	20
. Library services:	500		35	-
. Mailing forms:	380		50	-
. Tutorials for individuals:	75		-	-
. Residential Schools:	55		-	-
. Examinations:	350		-	60
. Teleconferences & teletutorials:	50		20	-

Chapter 4 Tasmania

A Tasmanian case study

Chris Carstens and David Kember

ABSTRACT

The Burnie, Devonport and Hobart study centres of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education are described. The Burnie and Devonport centres have been established recently to support mixed-mode courses, offering face-to-face teaching as well as support for external units. To perform this role, the centres have seven full-time lecturing staff. The role and facilities of the Hobart centre are analysed and the function is diagnosed as primarily that of a secondary campus. The operation of the North-West Council for Community Education is also described. Its prime roles are those of an educational broker and a regional study centre. The study centre networks in Tasmania are seen as being in a state of flux and the issue of cooperation and future developments are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is primarily concerned with the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (Tasmanian CAE)[1] which has its main campus in Launceston. The University of Tasmania, the other tertiary institution in Tasmania, offers no courses by distance education but does teach some first-year Arts subjects by face-to-face methods in Devonport on the north-west coast of Tasmania. The lectures and tutorials are given by lecturers who drive up from Hobart.

The Tasmanian CAE offers a number of external degree and diploma level courses mainly to students resident in Tasmania. To support these external students, the College has a study centre in Hobart and has recently opened two study centres on the north-west coast, one in Burnie and the other in Devonport. (See figure 4.1.)

Also operating in the north-west is the North-West Council for Community Education (NWCCE). The NWCCE does not offer any courses of its own but acts as a broker in directing students towards the most appropriate courses and institutions. It subsequently acts as a regional centre in support of courses offered by other institutions.

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[1]At the time of this chapter going to press, the Tasmania College of Advanced Education is about to have its name changed to the Tasmanian State Institute of Technology.

Figure 4.1 Study centres of the Tasmanian College of Advanced education

■ Main campus
● Study centre

Figure in Roman gives number of external students in region of study centre.

Figure underlined gives number of mixed mode students in region of study centre.

EXTERNAL STUDIES AT THE TASMANIAN COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

The Tasmanian CAE started offering external units in 1977. In common with most other Australian tertiary institutions offering distance education courses, academic departments are responsible for teaching both internal and external students. The External Studies Unit has an instructional design and support role. The historial development and mode of operation of the Unit has been described by Mezger et al. (1984, p.73) so its features will be described in this chapter only if they have some bearing on the formation or operation of the study centres.

The Tasmanian CAE offers a limited range of external courses and normally enrols only students resident in Tasmania except for one course in agricultural business management. However, enrolled students who subsequently leave the State to settle elsewhere in Australia may be permitted to complete their course from their new place of residence. In 1984, the College had 633 external students and 221 mixed-mode students taking some units externally and others on campus.[2]

[2]All statistics on Tasmanian CAE are from the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education, Annual Statistical Collection, April 1984.

785 of the external and mixed-mode students are resident in Tasmania. (See appendix 4.1.) Tasmania has an area less than one third the size of Victoria and less than half the size of England and Wales combined, so the Tasmanian CAE external enrolments can be considered as concentrated into a much smaller geographical area than is normal for distance education in Australia. However, within that area the population is well dispersed. The population in Tasmania is about 427,000 (Allan 1984) and it is the most decentralised of all the states with only forty per cent of the population residing in Hobart, the capital.

The distribution of its external students has permitted the Tasmanian CAE to provide tutorial support for its external courses reasonably economically. Tutorials are normally held once a month for first-year units in each of the major Tasmanian population centres of Burnie, Devonport, Hobart and Launceston. Occasionally, tutorials are held in other parts of Tasmania if there are sufficient students attending. Tutorials can be arranged for subsequent year units if student numbers in a location are sufficient (that is, four or more) and finances are adequate. In addition to tutorials, the majority of units have non-compulsory, one-day study schools at the Launceston campus.

Some tutorials are run by full-time academic staff of the College at either the Launceston campus or one of the other population centres, the latter necessitating some travelling by the staff. In the main, however, part-time 'local-liaison' tutors are hired for the population centres. The role of these tutors has some similiarity to that of the British Open University tutor-counsellors (Clennel et al. 1977) in that Tasmanian CAE tutors are expected to provide pastoral advice and counselling in addition to academic tutoring. Unlike the Open University, however, no attempt is made to maintain a student's association with a tutor through an entire course. As the Tasmanian CAE tutors are appointed for specific units, semester by semester, any degree of institution-initiated continuity in the student-tutor relationship would be accidental.

Open University tutors and counsellors are recruited by the regional staff at the study centres and have, therefore, limited contact with the academics at Milton Keynes. By contrast, the Tasmanian CAE system is more centralised on the Launceston campus. Tutors are recruited from there and the tutorial operation is directed from there rather than from any of the study centres.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDY CENTRES

The historical development of the Tasmanian CAE and its study centres is mentioned below briefly because it has had a bearing on the present mode of operation of the study centres.

Hobart

The Tasmanian CAE was effectively 'born' in 1972 as the result of the Advanced Education Act of 1968 (Tasmania). This Act established the Tasmanian Council of Advanced Education and charged it with the responsibility of consolidating within a multi-disciplinary college of advanced education all tertiary-level courses not being conducted by the University of Tasmania. The Tasmanian CAE emerged as a 'siamese twin' with two campuses: one purpose-built in the Hobart suburb of Mt. Nelson and the other, a transformed Launceston Teachers College, which became the Launceston Campus in the suburb of Newnham.

In many ways the two campuses developed separately to the extent that, for example, each produced its own campus handbook. In 1980, however, a State Government decision to rationalise teacher education courses in Tasmania led ultimately to the transfer of all but two courses at the Mt. Nelson Campus of the Tasmanian CAE to its northern counterpart, the Tasmanian CAE Newnham Campus, or to the University of Tasmania. Part of one building of the old Mt. Nelson campus was retained by the Tasmanian CAE as its Hobart Study Centre to support external students in the south of Tasmania and full-time and part-time students enrolled in Hobart in the Legal Practice and Enviromental Design courses.

Burnie and Devonport

Study centres in Burnie and Devonport grew from the need for a venue to hold tutorials and examinations for the external courses. The matriculation colleges in these towns were first used for this purpose. Other venues for tutorials and examinations were organised as student numbers and distributions changed. These venues had no Tasmanian CAE staff, no space designated for Tasmanian CAE and no facilities specifically provided for Tasmanian CAE courses.

If one accepts Gough's definition of study centres, the matriculation colleges in Burnie and Devonport cannot be regarded as study centres. At neither site could one claim that there was a physical facility, appropriately staffed, provided by an institution (Gough 1980, p.29). The early facilities at Burnie and Devonport were best considered, using Gough's classifications (1980, p.32), as part of the examination system.

The development of a physical presence on the north-west coast followed concerns which were recognised by the State and Federal Governments about low tertiary education participation rates in north and north-west Tasmania, and lobbying by people and institutions on the north-west coast for local provision of tertiary level courses.

In response to this pressure lecturers from the Schools of Business Studies and General Studies began, in 1979, to travel to the north-west coast to hold occasional lectures and tutorials in support of courses available externally. Eventually a study centre was established in Burnie in 1982 followed by one in Devonport in early 1984, with support from the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

A major function of the centres in the north-west has been to attempt to extend regional accessibility to advanced education by offering face-to-face teaching as well as providing support to the existing program of external courses.

The initial appointment of a full-time lecturer in General Studies (Philosophy) and an office assistant in Burnie in 1982 was quickly followed by other full-time lecturing and administrative appointments. In 1985, seven full-time lecturing staff are based at the North-West study centres, three in Burnie (one in General Studies, and one each in Business Studies and Engineering/Computing) and four in Devonport (two in Business Studies, Gerneral Studies and one each in Business Studies and Engineering/Computing). Each centre has an office assistant and both centres are served by a shared administrative officer with responsibilities for developing student support services, promoting advanced education courses and overall administration of the study centres.

STUDY CENTRES OR SECONDARY CAMPUSES?

At this point it is worth examining the role and composition of the Tasmanian CAE study centres to highlight their unusual features and to consider whether they may accurately be classified as study centres according to Gough's definition.

Hobart

The Hobart Study Centre offers courses in Legal Practice and Enviromental Design on a face-to-face basis to full-time and part-time students as well as providing support services for external students. While the Centre has eight lecturing and six administrative and clerical support staff (full-time and part-time), all but three of the administrative staff (one full-time administrative officer and two part-time office assistants) are specifically concerned with the internal courses in Legal Practice and Enviromental Design. The academic teaching staff have little or no contact with external students as their courses are not offered externally, and three of the six administrative staff are engaged exclusively in supporting internal students.

In considering the Tasmanian CAE centres, it is instructive to take note of Gough's analysis of the Albury/Wodonga campus of Riverina CAE, which he classified as a secondary campus because the facilities and staff were determined by the on-campus population and were greatly in excess of what would have been provided had the centre been established solely for external students. (Gough, p.30.)

If Gough's definition is accepted the Tasmanian CAE centre at Hobart perhaps fits closest to the category of a secondary campus. The office and classroom accommodation, retained by the Tasmanian CAE at Mount Nelson, is necessary for the operation of the courses still taught

face to face in Hobart. If the Tasmanian CAE had not retained facilities at Mt Nelson for teaching these courses, there is little doubt that tutorials for external courses could and would have been offered at sites belonging to other educational institutions. The only physical facilities at the Centre which are not needed for the internal classes are the computer terminals used for external computing units.

In terms of its impact and services to external students, it is difficult to see how past external students from the Hobart region could have perceived the Centre as being very different from the other tutorial locations around the State in 'borrowed' classrooms. The status of Hobart, as a predominantly secondary campus, is highlighted by the Tasmanian CAE handbook for off-campus students. The 1984 handbook directs all student enquiries to the Launceston campus with only a brief description of the facilities and services available to external students at the Hobart Study Centre (Tasmanian College of Advanced Education 1984a, p.3). This lack of institutional publicity about the Hobart study centre may be one factor in the perception of the full-time administrative officer that the resources are under-utilised by external students in the area.

Another factor may be its apparent inaccessibility. Although only about ten minutes drive from the centre of Hobart, the steep winding road up to Mt.Nelson seems to involve too much effort for most students. Use of the centre may improve in early 1986 when it moves to a location in the heart of the city.

The main usage of the study centre by external students is for:

- information and advice about courses;
- tutorial meetings and teletutorials;
- computing facilities;
- library;
- examinations; and
- communication links to the Launceston campus.

Burnie and Devonport

The Burnie and Devonport study centres are unusual, if not unique in Australia, for offering conventional face-to-face teaching as well as providing support for the College's external courses.

By utilising the lecturers based at the study centres and others travelling up from the Launceston Campus, students in the north-west region may undertake full-time or part-time courses on a mixed-mode basis in Arts, Business, Computing and Industrial Technology. In these mixed-mode courses students undertake some units taught in the traditional face-to-face method, supplemented by others in an external mode. Courses in Teaching (for TAFE teachers) and Music are conducted at the study centre by lecturers from Launceston and part-time local staff respectively.

It is interesting to note that the main emphases of the Tasmanian CAE's attempt to extend the accessibility of advanced education in the north-west of Tasmania have been to decentralise teaching staff to study centres in the region for the offering of part-time and full-time courses and, at the same time, to supplement the offering of external courses with additional tutorial support. These efforts may be seen as presenting a 'best of both worlds' situation to students: traditional face-to-face lectures and tutorial discussions, as well as specially designed distance-learning materials. It is indicative perhaps of the prevalent notion that tertiary distance courses still need the supplementation of traditional classroom teaching.

The range of functions performed by the north-west study centres for external students is much wider than that of the Hobart Centre. Major usage of the centre by students includes:

- teaching (lectures, tutorials, teletutorials and seminars);
- information and advisory services (course and study counselling);
- applications, enrolments and general administration;
- orientation and study skills programs;
- computing, video and other equipment; and
- examinations.

The study centres also play a major role in the promotion of advanced education courses in the region, including liaison with schools and matriculation colleges, government departments, professional bodies, business and industry.

The centres cannot be classified as secondary campuses since the facilities are not primarily there to support courses for full-time internal students and are not in excess of requirements for a supporting role. On the other hand, the provision of academic staff is a luxury for the support of pure distance education courses. Perhaps the best conclusion one can draw is that the Burnie and Devonport Centres do not truly fit into any of Gough's classifications but are a new development to be watched with interest.

THE NORTH-WEST COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The North-West Council for Community Education (NWCCE) is a State-funded body established in 1979 to improve access to tertiary education for people living in the north-west region of Tasmania. This is an area where about twenty-two per cent of the State's population lives, but in which there is no tertiary educational institution. Furthermore, the higher education participation rate in the region is significantly lower than State and national averages.

The major function of the NWCCE is that of an education 'broker' for courses from all around Australia. Hezger et al. (1982, p.56) have described the service as offering information, speeding up communications, acting as an education ombudsman and offering a sympathetic ear to the prospective student. In 1984 the Council received

429 queries from the north-west region (NWCCE 1984). The NWCCE acts as an 'access centre' for Deakin University students and provides formal and informal assistance to staff and students of a number of other tertiary institutions. The Council stresses its role as a regional centre, funded by the region and accessible to all institutions. The NWCCE also has a political and strategic role. The Council provides advice to the State Minister for Education on the development of opportunities for tertiary education in the north-west region. The NWCCE has worked for the local provision of tertiary courses. It supported the development of Tasmanian CAE's presence on the north-west coast and also the offering of a limited number of Bachelor of Arts subjects by the University of Tasmania.

To provide this service the NWCCE has a full-time Director, Office Assistant and part-time Field Officer in Burnie in premises shared with the staff of the Tasmanian CAE study centre. In Devonport there are two part-time Field Officers. The Director is the Executive Officer of the Council which consists of himself plus six residents of the north-west region, appointed by the State Minister for Education.

COOPERATION

Given the somewhat turbulent history of tertiary education in Tasmania, especially during the 1970s and early 1980s, one could be forgiven for being pessimistic about the possibility of cooperation between the providers and enablers of tertiary education in the State examined in this chapter: the Tasmanian CAE, the University of Tasmania and the NWCCE. The rationalisation process, which was undertaken by the State Government in 1980, particularly strained relations between all parties.

Tasmania is a small and sparsely populated state with two main tertiary institutions at opposite ends of the island, which to some extent are in competition for students in a number of course areas. Furthermore, in recent years the increasing availability and quality of external courses from a number of interstate institutions have added to the marginality and competitive aspects of tertiary education in Tasmania.

Unlike other states Tasmania does not have a centralised state tertiary education admission scheme. In other states competition for student enrolments seems to have declined as many institutions have been able to reach their allocated quotas. In Tasmania both the Tasmanian CAE and the University appear to be actively seeking to boost their enrolments. There has been evidence of a degree of rivalry between these parties and instances of discord, though cooperation is evident in a number of areas which are detailed below.

TCAE and NWCCE

Cooperation and links between these bodies, both formal and informal, have been a feature since the origin of the NWCCE in 1979. Accommodation and clerical support is shared in Burnie. The Chairman of the NWCCE is also a member of the Council of Advanced Education; the Tasmanian CAE's North-West Administrative Officer is a member of the Devonport Advisory Group of the NWCCE.

TCAE and the University of Tasmania

The offering in 1983 of a limited number of first-year level Bachelor of Arts subjects on the north-west coast by the University of Tasmania was interpreted by many as the beginning of competition between the institutions in the region. However, the Tasmanian CAE and the University have now agreed to establish a joint 'shop front' study centre in Devonport, and talks on transferability of credit in Arts subjects between the institutions are currently under way.

NWCCE and the University of Tasmania

The NWCCE acts in many ways as the north-west coast agent of the University of Tasmania in providing students with information and advice, assistance with enrolments, rooms and facilities for teaching purposes.

NWCCE and interstate institutions

The NWCCE assists interstate institutions to support their students resident in the region of north-west Tasmania. The NWCCE acts as an access centre for Deakin University and it also assists other institutions either formally or informally.

The role of the NWCCE as a broker, in assisting students to enrol with interstate institutions, and as a regional centre, in offering subsequent support services, is a fine example of interstate cooperation. However, the service provided has been less warmly applauded by the Tasmanian institutions when they see students enrolling in courses similiar to those they offer. The potential for conflict has grown as the Tasmanian CAE and the University have built up their facilities and offerings on the north-west coast.

The brokering service provided by the NWCCE can be compared to the service provided by the Northern Territory External Studies Centre, which advises Northern Territory students on enrolment and facilitates their subsequent study by providing support on behalf of a number of providers of distance education. The potential for conflict over the brokering role may be less in the Northern Territory as the only local tertiary institution, the Darwin Institute of Technology, offers only a limited number of external courses at the advanced college level.

THE FUTURE

Cooperation

Overall there is an encouraging trend towards cooperation between institutions involved in distance education in Tasmania. This has been influenced by associations and friendships developed in professional bodies (such as Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association and Australian Institute of Tertiary Educational Administrators) and by a spirit and attitude of goodwill among officers of these institutions based in the regions. Nevertheless, there is scope for increased cooperation in a number of areas, including sharing of information and facilities, cross-crediting of subjects in similiar courses offered by the University and the Tasmanian CAE, and an integrated approach to purchasing and sharing of computer and communications equipment.

Development of facilities

It has been pointed out that the study centre facilities at Burnie and Devonport are normally in excess of those provided by institutions in other states for municipalities with similiar populations. This statement is especially true with regard to the staffing levels at the centres. In this respect the pressure from the community on the north-west for the provision of higher education facilities has been quite successful.

Whether the build-up of facilities has had any significant effect on tertiary participation rates remains to be seen as the enrolment statistics kept in the past were not sufficiently detailed on location to permit a viable analysis. Furthermore, the study centres are still in much too early a stage of development to indicate trends with any certainty.

Future changes in facilities

To date the build-up of study centre facilities has been characterised by a series of largely uncoordinated initiatives by the institutions in response to community and political pressure and opportunities presented by the availability of Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission funding. The build-up has taken place over a short period of time and the network is still very much in a state of flux and development. The location of the centres is being considered as it is realised that the present premises are not necessarily adequate.

In May 1985 the Burnie Study Centre moved to expanded premises shared with the NWCCE and close to the heart of Burnie. The facilities at the new premises are described in appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

In Devonport the University plans to share a study centre with the Tasmanian CAE. The centre will act as a shop front in providing information about the subjects it offers in Devonport. This will involve relocating the Centre away from the present premises in rented commercial office space. A search for suitable premises is currently under way.

The Hobart Centre, in the former Mount Nelson campus, is located some distance from the city centre. There are firm plans to relocate the centre in early 1986 in a renovated building on the waterfront in the heart of the city.

Development of services

With the appointment of an administrative officer with a background in distance education, the centres in Burnie and Devonport have begun to offer increased support to the Tasmanian CAE external students. Following this lead the staff at the Hobart Centre are also developing that role. There is still room to develop further the roles of the centres as local advisory and enrolment centres for the Tasmanian CAE's external courses.

There is a need in the future for the Tasmanian CAE external studies operation to make greater use of the human and physical resources located in the study centres. The External Studies Unit has retained a highly centralised organisational structure which was developed before the study centres were formed. Academic staff at the centres are responsible to their Schools and administrative staff to the Registrar, so many of the initiatives at the centres have taken place independently of the External Studies Unit.

Teaching techniques

The teaching style in courses offered at the centres is evolving. In formal terms some units are offered by face-to-face teaching while others are available externally. In practice the distinction between the modes often becomes blurred. If external study materials are available for 'face-to-face' units the 'lecture' is often turned into a tutorial or seminar discussion of the study materials. For 'external' units the lecturers located at the study centres offer higher levels of tutorial support than is normal for courses offered by distance education.

It would be more rational to recognise this fusion of teaching modes. The community pressure from the north-west has requested face-to-face teaching rather than external courses. However, the size of the population makes conventional lecture courses cost ineffective, especially for higher level units. The logical middle ground is to use self-study materials and utilise the staff at the centres to offer extensive tutorial support. This strategy is especially attractive in that the study materials would be utilised for external courses and centre-based courses. In developing the additional self-study materials use could be made of the skills of the instructional design staff and editors who participate in the development of study materials for external courses (Mezger et al. 1984, p.73).

Use of communications technology

As yet, the only communications technology which has been intensively used in offering courses through the study

centres is the automobile. The development of teleconferencing using teleconferencing bridges has been retarded by experiences of poor telephone reception. Cooperation over potential use of telecommunications technology is in evidence. The University and Tasmanian CAE participated in trials of an interactive video link for a University Masters course. A group known by the acronym TUTE (Tasmanians Using Telecommunications for Education) has been formed to liaise between post-secondary institutions over the use and acquisition of communications technology. The group has representatives from the Tasmanian CAE, the University, TAFE and the Australian Maritime College. The convenor of TUTE acts as the State representative on the National Working Party on Telecommunications in Tertiary Education chaired by Dr. Bill Carroll of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Victoria. TUTE has produced a discussion paper suggesting a teleconferencing network linking study centres in Tasmania, which would be open to use by all post-secondary institutions.

Use of computer facilities at the centres has so far been restricted to teaching units in computer programming. Great potential exists for the use of computer assisted learning, computer managed learning and electronic mail, especially if students are permitted access to the facilities and terminals of TASNET, the highly developed on-line computer network of the State Education Department (Munro 1983).

CONCLUSION

The offering of local tertiary distance education courses and the establishment of study centres as a support mechanism for these courses have recent origins in Tasmania. As has been discussed earlier, political considerations have not been insignificant in shaping developments in this brief history. Furthermore it is fair to say that the development and interlinking of study centres have been in the main slow and uncoordinated.

Recently, however, there has been evidence of the recognition of the need for a planned and cooperative approach towards the development of a study centre network in Tasmania, e.g. Tasmanian CAE-University-NWCCE jointly occupied and administered premises in the north-west and the activities of TUTE. It is hoped that these developments will be consolidated and extended in the future.

The most unusual feature of the system is the stress on mixed-mode teaching, which has evolved from the decision to base a number of lecturers at the north-west study centres. The system may be better suited to Tasmania than to other states because of the small number of population centres and the fact that the comparatively shorter distances between centres permit lecturers to travel to the centres to offer classes. The approach needs a longer-term evaluation to determine its efficiency for Tasmania and to see whether there is scope for its employment elsewhere.

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Appendix 4.1: Study Centres of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education: location and premises

Study centre	Burnie	Devonport	Hobart
Distance from Launceston campus (km)	160	110	220
Population	20368	21424	128603
No. of Tasmanian CAE students			
- external	63	53	213
- mixed mode	23	12	33
Ownership/ cooperative usage	Education Department premises at nominal rent shared with NWCCE. Premises available to other tertiary institutions and community groups.	Leased space in commercial building. Available to other users, though space a problem.	Premises retained in former Tasmanian CAE campus, at present mainly occupied by Hobart Matriculation College.
Teaching space	4 lecture/ tutorial rooms; rooms for student private study	1 lecture/ tutorial room	7 lecture/ tutorial rooms
Office space	Reception and separate office areas for NWCCE and Tasmanian CAE	Yes	Yes
Opening hours	8.45am to 5.00pm Open for tutorials and classes in evenings. 24-hr access to computing facilities.	8.45am to 5 pm Open for orials and classes in evenings. 24-hr access to computing facilities.	8.45am to 5.00pm Open in evening for tutorials. 24-hr access to computer terminals.

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Appendix 4.2: Study centres of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education: services, facilities and functions

Study centre	Burnie	Devonport	Hobart
Computing	4 micros (BBC + IBM) 1 on-line terminal 2 printers	2 IBM micros 1 on-line terminal 2 printers	4 IBM micros 3 on-line terminals 2 printers
Telephone	Teleconferencing plus after-hour answering service	Teleconferencing plus after-hour answering service	Teleconferencing facility
Video	VCRs & monitors	VCRs & monitors	VCRs & monitors
Other audio-visual aids	Overhead projectors, slide projectors, cassette recorders, microfiche reader	Overhead projectors, slide projectors, cassette recorders, microfiche reader	Overhead projectors, slide projectors, cassette recorders, microfiche reader
Library facilities	Small Tasmanian CAE collection housed in Hellyer Regional Library (State)	Small Tasmanian CAE library housed in Mersey Regional Library (State)	Small Tasmanian CAE collection. Full-time librarian. Access to University library and collection.
Human resources			
- academic	3 full-time	4 full-time	nil
- administrative	1 office assistant	1 office assistant 1 administrative officer	1 full-time 2 part-time 1 librarian
Functions			
- information and advice	Yes	Yes	Yes
- examinations	Yes	Yes	Yes
- teaching	Yes	Yes	External part-time tutoring only

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Chapter 5 Western Australia

The Western Australian connections

John R. Walsh

ABSTRACT

The four tertiary institutions in Perth (University of Western Australia, Western Australian Institute of Technology, Murdoch University and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education) have built a strong network with the help of community and regional TAFE colleges to overcome the problems of vast distance and low population. Rationalisation of resources has also encouraged the concept of contracting and growing cooperation in telecommunications equipment sharing. For the truly isolated student, however, mail, telephone and annual staff visits remain a basic level of support.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR

Western Australia is a vast state which is also immensely rich in natural resources but has only a small population of over one million people. Seventy per cent of the people live in the capital city of Perth which is in the south-west and the remaining thirty per cent are distributed over the whole state with four cities (Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, Albany and Geraldton) of about 20,000 people and a small number of towns of populations ranging from 10,000-5,000. The state has an enormous number of very small towns, isolated communities and homesteads.

Guiton & Smith (1984) sum up this challenge to providers of education in Western Australia as follows:

> Take a population of 1.2 million; locate seventy per cent of this population in the world's most isolated capital; scatter the remainder over 2.5 million square kilometres in Australia's largest state; throw in unsealed roads and unsatisfactory communication systems and you have a challenge for distance education that has few parallels among advanced nations (p.83).

Figure 5.1 shows the location of Perth and other cities and towns mentioned in this chapter to help readers who are unfamiliar with the geography of Western Australia.

Figure 5.1 Major cities and towns of Western Australia

PROVIDERS OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are three types of providers of postsecondary education in Western Australia:

- Tertiary institutions
- Community colleges
- Regional colleges for technical and further education (TAFE)

These are described briefly as follows.

Tertiary institutions

There are four tertiary institutions in Perth:

- The University of Western Australia
- Murdoch University
- The Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT)
- The Western Australian College of Advanced Education (WACAE)

The University of Western Australia handed over responsibility for credit external studies to Murdoch University in 1975 but currently is increasing its involvement in providing extension (i.e. non-credit) courses at a distance. It maintains a large and vigorous extension services section which handles short courses and continuing education. Murdoch, WAIT and WACAE which are involved in external studies, also offer extension courses but the University of Western Australia plays the major role in this latter activity.

The Western Australian Institute of Technology has a branch, the Western Australian School of Mines, at Kalgoorlie, 600 km east; an Agricultural Institute at Northam, 100 km east; and operates a small feeder school in engineering at Collie in the Western Australian coalfield 200 km south of Perth.

The Western Australian College of Advanced Education is a recent amalgamation of four colleges as a result of rationalisation of small single purpose colleges. It has diversified its offerings and will have a branch at Bunbury known as the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education from January 1986. Bunbury is a city port 200 km south of Perth.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

There are three autonomous community colleges operating with regional responsibility in Kalgoorlie, Karratha and Port Hedland. These colleges function across a broad spectrum of community interest courses, apprentice and technician courses, continuing education courses and may also offer tertiary courses on behalf of tertiary institutions.

Regional colleges for technical and further education (TAFE)

The Technical and Further Education division of the State Education Department has three regional colleges at Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton. These have charters similar to community colleges and enjoy semi-autonomy under regional councils. They also offer tertiary courses under contract.

THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF MIXED MODE EDUCATION

External studies is regarded by Murdoch, WAIT and WACAE as a mode of study complementing internal full-time and part-time avenues. Once admitted to a course, a student can elect the external mode provided that the unit is available externally. In consequence, many enrol as 'mixed mode' students studying partly internally and partly externally. The great majority of external students are in fact in the metropolitan area. Table 5.1 gives the age distribution and mode of study of external students at WAIT.

Table 5.1 Western Australia Institute of Technology: age distribution and mode of study of students as at 31 March 1985

Age	Mixed mode	External only	Total
60 & above	2	6	8
51-60	18	39	57
41-50	55	186	241
26-40	117	291	408
18-25	277	319	596
			1310

External study is no longer solely, or even primarily, for the isolated student. External study is an integral part of the pattern of study offered to all students. Table 5.2 shows the distribution of WAIT external students according to broad disciplines. This having been said, it remains true that institutional responsibilities to isolated students are fully appreciated and tremendous effort is directed to servicing them.

Table 5.2 Western Australian Institute of Technology: distribution of external students according to broad disciplines as at 31 March 1985

Division	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Other
Arts, Education & Social Science	427	24	-
Business & Administration	723	261	-
Engineering & Science	158	70	-
Health Sciences	218	51	-
Western Australian School of Mines	27	2	-
Extension	-	-	94

NETWORKING PRINCIPLES: NON-DUPLICATING COURSES AND CONTRACTING

With four tertiary institutions in a vast state of relatively low population open competition would have been disastrous. The presentation of external studies is therefore rationalised by field of study with, for example, external studies in Business coming solely from the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

But one of the most appealing developments in Western Australian education is the concept and application of contracting.

Contracting is a concept advocated both by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and the Western Australian Post-Secondary Commission whereby one institution licenses another to teach on its behalf part or all of one of its award programs. There is a very close connection between contracting and distance education and the connection is the basis of an effective network. By way of illustration, WAIT contracts with

Hedland College to teach the first year of its Bachelor of Business course. Students are taught, full time or part time, in Port Hedland the tertiary units of the first year of the WAIT Bachelor of Business degree. Students sit the WAIT examination and success entitles them to progress to higher years of the degree course either by external studies at home in Hedland or by transfer to the WAIT campus.

The University of Western Australia could contract the external presentation of some of its award courses (e.g. Classics, which is currently denied to country students) to another institution without having to establish an infrastructure to support the offering.

The Western Australian Institute of Technology contracts the first year of its Bachelor of Business course to:

- Great Southern Regional College of TAFE (Albany)
- Karratha College
- Hedland College
- Kalgoorlie College

and will extend this in 1986 to Geraldton Regional College. Table 5.3 gives the distribution of WAIT contracted students in the first semester of 1985. It also contracts, to a lesser extent, the Bachelor of Applied Science (Nursing), Bachelor of Applied Science (Maths) and Bachelor of Engineering. In coming years, WAIT anticipates it will contract Bachelor of Business (Agriculture), Associate Diploma in Agriculture, Diploma of Teaching (TAFE) and the Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts), and extend its contracting to include the South West Regional College at Bunbury.

Table 5.3 Western Australian Institute of Technology: number and distribution of contracted students within Western Australia in Semester 1, 1985

College contracted	No. of equivalent full-time students and subjects
Portland	3.0 (Business)
Karratha	9.0 (Business) 0.5 (Engineering) 2.5 (Mathematics)
Kalgoorlie	8.0 (Business) 7.0 (Nursing)
Albany	13.5 (Business) 5.5 (Nursing)

Because of the involvement in tertiary education the community and regional colleges have appointed staff, either full time or part time, with ability to teach at tertiary level. The presence of these staff is the basis of effective study centres for external students in the various regions. Externally enrolled students may seek

assistance at the colleges and may join classes if their external unit is also being offered to contract students. They utilise library holdings and computing resources. Library holdings built up for contract students studying on campus are ideal collections for external students in that the teaching of contract students is often based on material which is also used by external students.

The enthusiastic support of the regional and community colleges for contracted studies over the past two years has created a very effective network of external study centres housed in those colleges. What is described so far is not unique to the Western Australian Institute of Technology, as these colleges also contract courses from Murdoch University and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

Contracting and resulting study centres have not reached their full progression. Pressures will come, if not from the regional colleges, certainly from their students for second and higher years studies to be made available under contract. The staff of the colleges could be employed as tutors for external students so that all assignments, tutoring and guidance could be done within the region on material designed, prepared and despatched from the metropolitan institutions. Effectively, the student classification could change from external to contract external.

To encourage contracting of courses in Western Australia the Western Australian Post-Secondary Education Commission allocates a special quota at generous per capita funding. This money flows to the tertiary institutions which pass on up to eighty per cent of the funds to the country colleges. Funds to the colleges enable the contracted studies to be better serviced.

NETWORKING FOR TELECONFERENCING

It is quite obvious from the above that there is a great deal of collaboration among post-secondary institutions in Western Australia. Another area of cooperation could well be in the telecommunications area.

The regional colleges, most of which are remote from Perth, can gain from acquiring teleconferencing equipment to be utilised via either landline or satellite. Once so equipped, lecturing or tutorial assistance becomes available from the Perth campus simultaneously to any member of these study centres. Limited tutoring, audio alone, is currently done via landline.

One regional college, Albany, is linked to WAIT via landline and CYCLOPS equipment allowing voice and graphic communication.

Satellite communication was utilised through the ATS-1 satellite with Kalgoorlie, Albany, Collie and Bunbury for teaching purposes but also allowed general conferencing with a staff of institutions on the east coast of Australia (Idle 1984). Unfortunately this satellite has become inoperable from early 1985. The advent of AUSSAT due for launch on 10 August 1985 may enable restoration of this valuable link.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

It has been proposed that staff from the regional colleges offer tutorials to external students (12 minutes per student per week) which would be paid for by the metropolitan institutions. Five students studying a particular unit externally would thus qualify for one hour per week tutorial assistance. Two or three students would qualify for an hour tutorial every second week. This concept is appealing and is under serious consideration.

The Collie Federated School of Mines, a small school of WAIT mentioned earlier, is so named because it is an institution with distinct tertiary and TAFE sections accountable to one Advisory Council. The School's tertiary sector offers first-year studies for all branches of enginneering and is moving into occupational health and safety. It also acts as an information and assistance centre for external students of all four tertiary institutions.

WAIT has operated for a decade the Bunbury Advanced Education Centre as a centre for advice, tutorial and resource distribution. It was most successful in its life and in the earlier years had the support of Murdoch University and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education. It will close in 1986 and its place will be taken by the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education launched as a substantial branch of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education. This Institute should provide the same services as the Centre now being phased out.

THE ISOLATED DISTANCE STUDENT

There still remain a substantial number of externally enrolled students who are not close to any study centre. These include teachers in small schools, housewives on isolated properties, workers in small mining communities, residents on Cocos Island etc.

These students are completely dependent on mail and telephone services. It should be appreciated that sometimes mail deliveries take place only once per week.

WAIT maintains a 24-hour 'ansaphone' service whereby a message can be left about learning difficulty. The expense of an often lengthy return call is met by the Institute.

Every endeavour is made to visit distant students at least once a semester and there can be no doubt that students greatly appreciate the personal interest shown. Cost is a strong factor and every endeavour is made to coordinate the tours of personnel from different institutions. The schools liaison officers of the institutions make sure that they are available to assist communication with isolated students.

Student support operations at Murdoch University and some personal reflections

Michael Campion

ABSTRACT

Murdoch University's policy of concentrating upon the interaction between individual students and teaching staff at the University whilst maintaining a commitment only to regional resource centres rather than developing a network of study centres is explained. It is accounted for in terms of the demographic distribution of students together with pedogogic principles related to the integrated mode of presentation. The author concludes with a personal view that a student support system grounded in a study centres network would not be a desirable development in Western Australia in the current economic and political climate.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR IN MURDOCH'S STRATEGY REGARDING STUDENT SUPPORT

The demographic character of Western Australia is the critical factor in Murdoch University's support for the external student. The state is enormous but the bulk of its population is located in Perth, the capital, while the remainder is located in regional centres or spread extremely thinly across the state.

Given this type of distribution of the general population, the distribution of Murdoch's external students is more easily understood. Table 5.4 gives external enrolments in September 1984, while appendix 5.2 gives the distribution within and outside Australia.

Table 5.4 Murdoch University: no. of external students as at September 1984

Western Australian metropolitan students	1042*
Non-metropolitan students (including overseas students)	583
Total : external students	1625

* This figure includes a substantial proportion of mixed mode students as explained in the text.

The non-metropolitan external enrolments of 583 for the period are analysed further in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Murdoch University: no. of external students (non-metropolitan) as at September 1984

Western Australian non-metropolitan students	365
Interstate students	183
Overseas students	35
Total : non-metropolitan students	583

Figures for student numbers and actual figures for course enrolments are of course very different; that is, the latter is a far larger figure. For example, there were 3,858 external course enrolments in 1984.

The reader should also bear in mind that Murdoch is a young though growing institution and that external students and external course enrolments currently form a significant proportion of the University's statistical profile. Approximately one third of Murdoch's 1984 students were either fully external or took some external courses, and approximately one quarter of all course enrolments were external.

The geographical distribution of these external students is illustrated in appendix 5.2 which also indicates the location of the resource centres used by Murdoch. These are normally situated in the regional centres of population.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

A major factor influencing Murdoch's policy with regard to its support of non-metropolitan external students within the state is its relationship with other post-secondary institutions, both metropolitan and non metropolitan.

In relation to the other metropolitan tertiary institutions, a number of points need to be made. First of all, Murdoch is now responsible for the offering of all University-based external studies for credit in W.A. but the University of Western Australia remains involved in the presentation of non-credit extension courses at a distance. Second, the Western Australian Institute of Technology has a commitment to funding regional study centres in TAFE and community colleges and a commitment to certain courses being taught on a regional basis, that is, through these local colleges. Overall there is a considerable degree of collaboration between the metropolitan institutions with regard to distance education, most particularly between WAIT and Murdoch. One example would be the Bunbury Centre, which is funded by the Institute but also acts as a resource centre for Murdoch students.

As for the non-metropolitan institutions, currently Murdoch's resource centres and contact persons tend to be located within these colleges and the contact persons frequently are staff members of the colleges. Debate about possible future collaborative ventures is proceeding. An example might be the offering of certain

courses from Murdoch through the regional colleges, or perhaps the local presentation of a preparatory course for students contemplating external enrolment at Murdoch. Further development in the relations between metropolitan and non-metropolitan institutions are certainly on the agenda, and the membership of Patrick Guiton, Director of External Studies at Murdoch, on the council at Karratha College is also indicative of cooperative intent.

INTEGRATED COURSE PRODUCTION AND MIXED-MODE STUDENTS

Two particular characteristics relating to Murdoch University also need to be explained here for a clearer understanding of Murdoch's decisions made in relation to study centre provision.

The first characteristic concerns course production and presentation and this is summed up in Murdoch terminology as the integrated mode. This notion describes a system where those courses which are offered externally are essentially the same as the relevant internal courses and are taught in the main by the same staff, although there are some differences in presentation and delivery of materials and methods of assessment.

Though extensive, the range of courses and programs available to Murdoch external students is more restricted than for internal students. Thus in 1984:

- while 47 programs were available internally, 24 programs were available externally;
- while 216 courses were available internally, 151 courses were available externally.

A consequence of this commitment is that the key interface must remain that between the individual students and their tutors at the providing institution (in this case Murdoch). This is so because those tutoring externally are, in the majority of cases, also involved in teaching internally and hence effectively ensure parity between external and internal courses and assessment. While this individualised contact frequently takes a written form, the telephone is a particularly relevant communications media in the West Australian context.

The second characteristic that requires mention is Murdoch's commitment to a substantial number of external students who reside within the metropolitan area. In relation to this category of students, it should be pointed out that a proportion (approximately thirty per cent of the total number of externals) are what we term mixed-mode students. These students choose to take some courses internally and some courses externally.

The point should be made regarding the metropolitan external students that geographic distance from the campus may not be the sole reason for external enrolment. Internal enrolment may be precluded because of child care or employment commitments. Furthermore, some students may prefer the privacy and relative flexibility of study patterns allowed by the external mode. The possibility of external enrolment for those in the metropolitan area, therefore, significantly increases the variety of enrolment possibilities.

For Murdoch's metropolitan external students, the campus itself clearly provides the facilities that elsewhere might be provided by a study centre.

If we turn now to the non-metropolitan externals, including students interstate and overseas, I would direct attention to certain features of the geographic distribution of students as illustrated in appendices 5.2 and 5.3 which give a total picture of what support services Murdoch students can get in various parts of Australia, including Western Australia. By way of example, a consideration of the post-code division in which Albany resources centre is situated reveals that students live up to 400 km from that centre (in York). Furthermore, if we look at external students in the Albany area we find twenty-six students with a total of 35 course enrolments in 25 different courses. The maximum in any one course is three students and 18 of the courses only had one enrolment in Albany. This type of distribution is in part a consequence of the commitment to an integrated mode. A glance at Appendix 5.2 will indicate that in other regions within Western Australia students are dispersed over far greater areas. Clearly, no regular local course-based face-to-face tutorial provision could be organised for a student population distributed in this way, and given the centrality of tutorial provision to successful study centre operation (Gough 1980, pp.32-33) local support for Murdoch externals needed to be constituted on a different and far lower key basis.

In essence Murdoch has opted to concentrate upon the interaction between individual students and teaching staff at the University, while maintaining a basic level of commitment to regional resource centres, rather than to proceed with the development of a study centre network. Clearly, further developments in telecommunications technology and the like may enhance these possibilities. Current developments regarding the FM sub-carrier system may be worthy of note.

DETAILS REGARDING RESOURCE CENTRES

Physical resources

No specific accommodation is owned or rented by Murdoch University for use as study centres, but temporary accommodation for occasional (bi-annual) meetings is organised by the relevant contact person and printed information is located in the libraries of the relevant regional institutions.

Murdoch course study guides and general information booklets, including handbooks, are supplied on a regular basis to the resource centres at Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Karratha and Port Hedland.

Computing resources for Murdoch students at the regional resource centres are as follows:

> Colleges at Hedland, Karratha and Kalgoorlie have substantial minicomputers and microcomputers and access for Murdoch external students is by individual arrangement with computing staff at those colleges

- At the the Newman Centre of Hedland College and the Geraldton Community Education Centre, a microcomputer is available for booking.

- There are no computing facilities at the Bunbury Advanced Education Centre and Albany Educational Resource Centre. In these towns external students may be able to obtain access to computing facilities at the local technical colleges. It is the same at Manjimup; students may be able to use Manjimup Senior High School computers.

The preferred mode of future development for Murdoch external students would be dial-up facilities to host computers at Murdoch using home computers.

Staff resources

The contact person at each resource centre has duties on behalf of Murdoch which are likely to form only a minor part of his or her overall role. Exceptions would be the Bunbury Advanced Education Centre and the Geraldton Community Education Centre where the officer-in-charge and coordinator have a greater commitment to the Perth metropolitan institutions.

Contact persons at the following centres receive a nominal payment from Murdoch: Albany, Bunbury, Esperance, Geraldton and Manjimup.

The major functions of these contact persons are to act as a first port of call for local inquiries and to direct students and prospective students to relevant telephone numbers and personnel at Murdoch for detailed information. An important but less on-going function, is to assist in the organisation and advertising of meetings when visits are arranged by staff from the External Studies Unit at Murdoch.

Country travel by Unit staff takes place twice a year and meetings with groups of students in resource centres and with individual students en route provide an important mechanism for generating feedback to the Unit and for supplying information and support to on-going and prospective students.

This travel provides an example of the type of collaboration which exists between WAIT and Murdoch, for frequently staff from both institutions share transport and produce a shared itinerary.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON STUDY CENTRE NETWORKS

I began this section by focusing upon demographic and geographical factors; a conventional approach for case study writers. However, by allowing our attention to be drawn towards these concrete and seemingly uncontroversial types of data, we are in danger of allowing the value commitments and consequent policies of those with responsibility for organising the provision of the specific services to remain hidden and hence unquestioned. By focusing upon resource limitations and

physical constraints we erroneously direct attention away from the various principles and prejudices which produce both particular and general policy decisions about educational aims and objectives.

As readers of this work will be well aware there is no longer, if there ever was, any comfortable consensus concerning the aims of higher education, nor even concerning who should have access to it. Furthermore, the distance education component of this sector of education is continuing in what can best be described as a state of considerable uncertainty. This uncertainty is being caused by the current Labor Government's decision not to expand funds for higher education at a level commensurate with the probable expansion of the demand for places, together with the Government's stress upon the need for institutions to make more places available for school leavers. Resourcing of support services for external students is unlikely to improve in such circumstances.

Added to this are the complexities of various forms of interstate collaboration in distance education such as the interchange of courses in Women's Studies between Deakin, Queensland and Murdoch Universities and discussions of cross-crediting arrangements between institutions at an intra-state level. Everpresent elements of institutional inertia and an absence of informed and adequately resourced deliberations regarding future educational policies also hinder progress on these issues. A work like that of Watts (1983) provides some stimulating suggestions regarding a number of different possible scenarios within which policies for higher education will need to be formulated. Clearly discussions of issues at this general and perhaps abstract level are required if a thoughtful and hence fruitful policy is to emerge and be implemented for a specific institutional framework such as study centre provision. Furthermore, these policies need to be formulated in a communications context in which rapid and, in some senses, mystifying changes are occurring. The consequence is that a simple solution to the problem of support services for students at a distance is unlikely.

In the current context I suspect that considerable effort will be required even to maintain the present level of access to distance higher education for mature students, and that the provision of extra resources for study centre facilities is highly unlikely <u>even</u> if it were desirable. Perhaps this points to a weakness in the Australian system of integrating external and internal education in the same institution for the consequence is that the institutions and the staff who work in them are subjected to conflicting claims of loyalty. Some would, however, exploit this situation by shifting their allegiances between the two student groups (internal and external) in order to maximise their own growth and career prospects respectively. On the other hand, the general problem of rationing resources between these two potential student populations is not solved by moving towards single-mode institutions (for example, the Open University in Britain). While the allegiance of the distance education institution and its staff may be unfaltering, the institution itself may be strategically weak and unable to defend the interests of those it was intended to serve. I

would expect that any resolution to this problem lies in the direction of greater integration rather than separation so that the distinction between school leavers and mature students, and between internal (on campus) and external (off campus) students will fade in significance. The strength of the integrated mode rests, in my view, in the closeness and potential intimacy of the relationship between the student and the person who has written, designed, and teaches the course. Hence I would prefer to focus attention and resources upon ways to facilitate and improve that form of interaction rather than to switch resources towards support mechanisms which at best can only be a poor substitute for that relationship.

The following brief extract from a report by Gough on study centres resonates to a degree with this opinion.

> The success of a study centre is, to a great extent, dependent upon the tutor-counsellors there. In the final analysis the study centre is merely a convenient base for their work. Indeed, tutor-counsellors operate effectively in certain areas without such a base; this has always been the case in the north of Scotland and the Western Isles.
>
> If this analysis is correct, then the tutor-counsellor is the vital element in the student support service of the Open University. Study centres are peripheral. Contrary to the original intentions of the planning committees, study centres may be superfluous elements in the Open University. Removing study centres from the range of support services probably would not have drastic repercussions in the overall system.
>
> (Gough 1980, pp.6-7)

I am well aware that student interaction with other students may be of considerable importance, for example, in the form of self-help groups. However, formalising and routinising arrangements of these kinds may well be counter-productive, especially when numbers are small and distance is great, and when so much depends upon individual student styles and personalities, not to mention domestic and employment circumstances. Murdoch University's External Studies Unit provides geographic lists of student details (including names, addresses, telephone numbers and current course enrolments) to all students who have indicated a willingness to be included and this information facilitates initial informal contact. Individual tutors can also facilitate student interaction in a number of ways for the groups of students for which they are responsible.

There is an optimum level of local support and to exceed this level would be wasteful of resources just as it would be wasteful of student potential if local support which was necessary was not available.

In the current situation my first priority would be to increase awareness of, and improve access to, higher education opportunities for the mature and those living away from the metropolitan area. Secondly, I would seek to improve the quality and perhaps increase the quantity of interaction between students and academics, and then,

after making progress on these issues, turn to other issues such as study centre provision. Of course, in a geographical context other than that of Western Australia, study centre activity might be the way to improve tutor-student interaction, but in Western Australia I am at present convinced that that is not the route to be taken.

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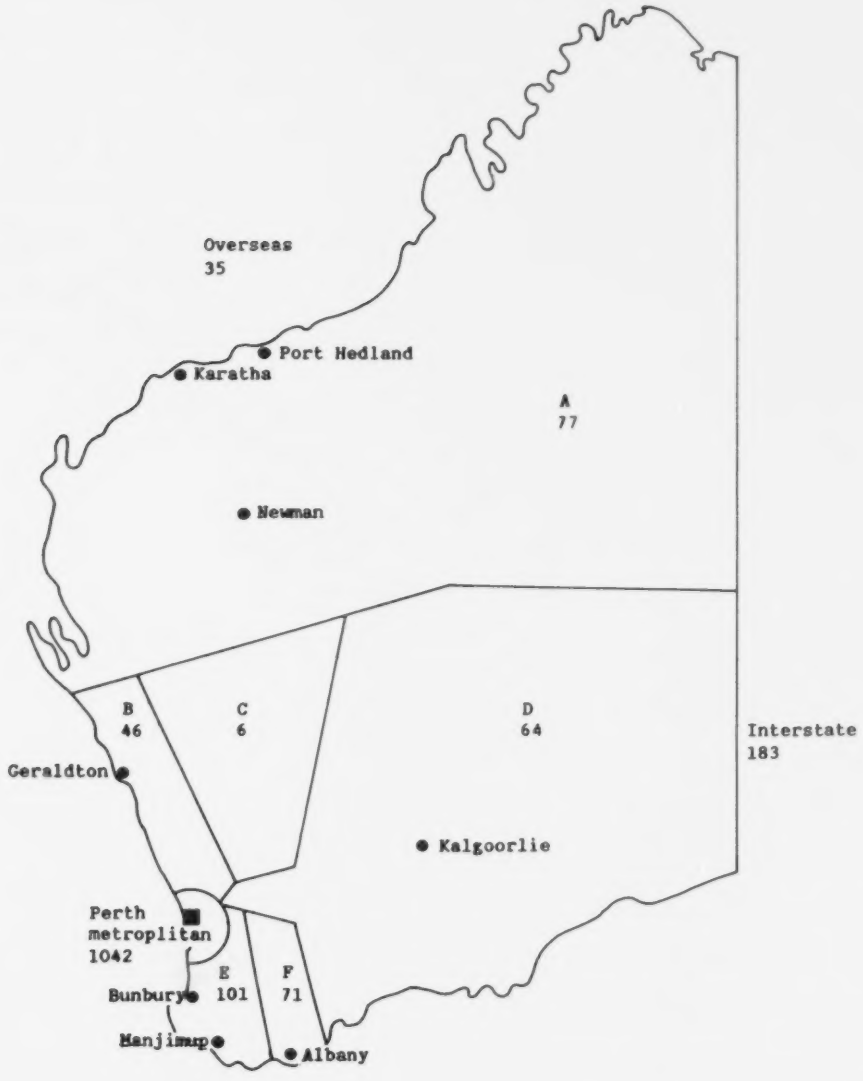
Appendix 5.1 Western Australian Institute of Technology: number and distribution of external students as at 31 March 1985

Appendix 5.2 Murdoch University: distribution of external students by regions as at 3 September 1984 with location of study centres



*A to F are postal divisions for Western Australia

Appendix 5.3: Local support facilities available for external students of Murdoch University

Western Australia

Albany	Education Resource Centre Serpentine Road Albany 6330 Contact: The Coordinator Telephone: (098) 41 4366
Bunbury	Bunbury Advanced Education Centre Outer Ring Road Bunbury 6230 Contact: Mr. Doug Parry (Officer in Charge) Telephone: (097) 21 2688
Esperance	Technical Centre Esperance High School Esperance 6450 Contact: Mr. Denis Nevin Telephone: (090) 71 2266
Geraldton	Geraldton Community Education Centre Forrest Lodge Gregory Street Geraldton 6530 Contact: The Coordinator Telephone: (099) 21 4477
Kalgoorlie	Kalgoorlie College Cassidy Street Kalgoorlie 6430 (Students are invited to use the Library and study facilities) Contact: Ms Carole Marlow Telephone: (090) 21 2133
Karratha	Karratha Regional College Karratha 6714 Contact: The Counsellor Telephone: (091) 85 1048
Manjimup	Manjimup Senior High School Manjimup 6258 Contact: Ms Ann Pow Telephone: (097) 71 1466
Port Hedland	Hedland Regional College P.O. Box 2544 South Hedland 6722 Or: Mr. Hudson Bancroft (Student Counsellor) Telephone: (091) 72 2144

Newman	Hedland College, Newman Centre P.O. Box 361 Newman 6753 or: Ms. Elizabeth Gorman (located in Kurra St.) Telephone: (091) 75 1135
South Australia	Students may contact: South Australian College of Advanced Education 178 North Terrace Adelaide 5000 Contact: Mr. Ian Mitchell, Head, Department of External Studies Telephone: (08) 223 8280
Victoria	Students resident in Melbourne are invited to use the facilities of the Melbourne Study Centre of Deakin University at 256 Flinders Street Melbourne 3000 Telephone: (03) 654 2273
Northern Territory	Students may contact: Northern Territory External Studies Centre Casuarina Campus Casuarina 5 Northern Territory 5792 Or: Dr. Kevin Livingston, (External Studies Coordinator) Telephone: (089) 204 483
New South Wales	Students may contact: Part Time Studies Centre MacQuarie University North Ryde 2113 Telephone: (02) 88 9272/3
Tasmania	
Burnie	Students may contact: North-West Council for Community Education 51 Alexander Street Burnie 7320 Or: Dr.Mike Walker Telephone: (004) 31 5544
Launceston	Students may contact: Tasmanian College of Advanced Education Launceston 7250 Or: Mr. Ross Mezger, Head of Off-Campus Programmes Telephone: (003) 260 292

Chapter 6 South Australia

A South Australian perspective on student support

Bruce King and Anne Forster

ABSTRACT

In developing a unit on student support for the Graduate Diploma in Distance Education, staff from the South Australian College of Advanced Education have taken a position on support provision which may be of interest in the context of this book. This paper indicates the stance adopted, outlines the way it has been incorporated into the Graduate Diploma course and considers its specific application to study centres.

MAJOR EMPHASIS IN THE GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

The course team responsible for developing the Graduate Diploma in Distance Education for the South Australian College of Advanced Education has maintained two major emphases through the seven instructional units of the course. These are:

- the holistic nature of distance education programs; and
- the importance of basing distance education provision on a view of students which, as far as possible, is responsive to their individual concerns and particular learning contexts.

The consequences of each of these for student support provision is discussed in this chapter.

THE HOLISTIC NATURE OF DISTANCE PROGRAMS

To confront possible incongruities in practice which follow from considering elements of distance education in isolation, the course team have argued for 'the program' as an appropriate basis for the organisation of one's thinking about distance provision. By program, we mean the sum of all arrangements a distance-teaching institution enters into, either directly or through an agent, to facilitate students' learning in a nominated course of study. Our sense of 'arrangement' incorporates notions of order and conscious decision. As a prescription, our view translates into an obligation to be aware of the actions and decisions taken, the justification offered for them, their inter-relationship and the degree of congruence in the purposes they reflect,

and how they actually impinge on students. In this sense, all distance education provision can be thought of as support for students and we believe this is a useful orientation to adopt.

There are, however, existing practices which are commonly considered support activities per se and normally distinguished from other aspects of the distance program, e.g. the preparation of course materials. We have found it convenient to make such distinctions in our own teaching. Even within this restricted meaning, student support practices should be seen as one of a set of related elements, planned and compatible with the other components of the total provision. This must be so if disjunctions between the aims served by each are to be avoided. Where support is not so conceived, it frequently becomes the province of administrators remote from teaching and can be cursory, fragmented, and isolated from the assumptions underpinning the learning situation and the course materials which tutors attempt to create.

Student support should be as consciously planned as any other element of the program. As such, changes to support provision will be subject to the same considerations as other innovations and can be introduced either poorly or well. Where they are not so planned, then when such provision as does occur not only be ad hoc, but likely to give students clear messages regarding the way they are seen by the institution and its agents which may have negative or dysfunctional consequences. As far as possible, we need to be conscious of what we, as educators and other representatives of our institution, do to students. The consistency with which support practices are genuinely helpful to students is likely to be a function of such practices being an intentional component of the distance program.

The question, then, remains as to whom should take decisions about student support. If the preceding is accepted, then compatibility with other decisions will be most assured when the decision-makers are the same. In our case, that means the course team or, in some instances, the individual distance educator. We return to this point later in the chapter.

DISTANCE PROVISION AS A RESPONSE TO INDIVIDUALS

We have argued (South Australian College of Advanced Education 1985, p.25) that all distance education courses are based, in part, on a view of the student. That is, they reflect a set of assumptions, often held implicitly, regarding the people taking the course. We have represented this diagrammatically in figure 6.1.

Clearly, the assumptions identified above are not the only kinds held, but they serve for the purpose of illustration. It follows that the views of the student held by the various decision-makers in an institution will have an impact on those aspects of the distance teaching process over which they have responsibility, e.g. course development, student support, and administrative arrangements. The diagram can thus be extended as shown in figure 6.2.

Figure 6.1 Assumptions about the student

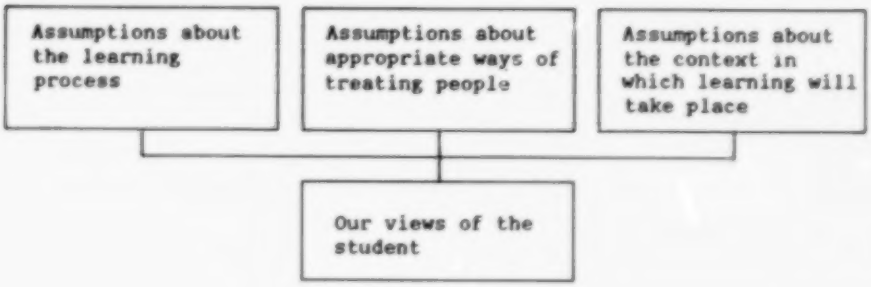
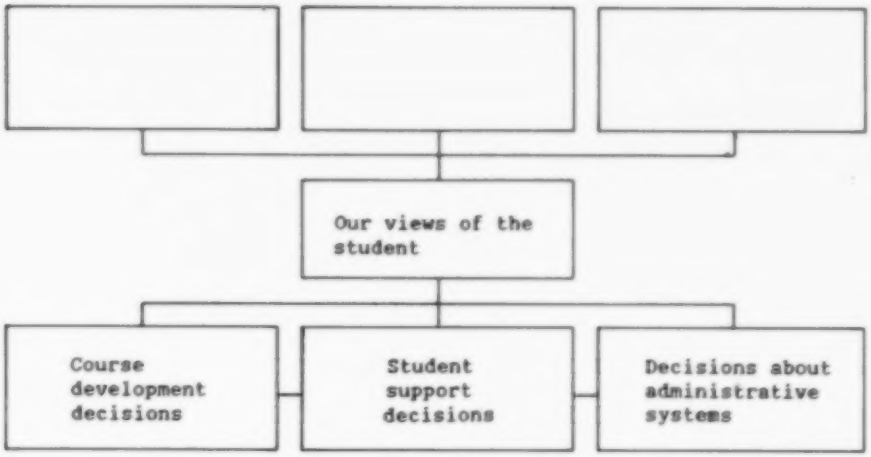

Assumptions about the learning process
Assumptions about appropriate ways of treating people
Assumptions about the context in which learning will take place
Our views of the student

Figure 6.2 Decisions based on assumptions about the student



Even in institutions where different individuals exercise control over the areas illustrated, there is likely to be some overlap between the various kinds of decision. Furthermore, the decisions taken in any area will depend upon the options the decision-makers see themselves as having. These will depend not only on their assumptions, but also on practical constraints, professional competence, previous experience, openess to innovation, and so on.

What is of concern here is that when decisions are taken without considering the assumptions they reflect (or worse, without awareness that they do reflect such assumptions) then students are likely to be treated badly or, at least, with apparent disregard for their concerns. One example will suffice. The decision to prepare course materials which make no allowance for diversity of student response reflects assumptions about both the process of learning and the contexts in which the different students will engage with the materials. At least one assumption about learning would seem to be that what is made of the materials will be largely the same from student to student. If they learn from the materials, they will do so in a sufficiently similar way for their improved performance to be measured by a common testing instrument applied to all their number. The second kind of

assumption would seem to be that the effect of the students engaging with the course materials will have so great and similar effect on each of them as to reduce to insignificance any difference in understanding which derive from their backgrounds, personality, or experience. This discussion is expanded in the Graduate Diploma materials referred to (South Australian College of Advanced Education 1985 pp.25ff.)

Our students have been encouraged to make the assumptions which shape their own distance education practice conscious both to reduce the unintentional elements of what they do and to ensure that their program is defensible. One test of defensibility is the extent to which individual students are enabled to achieve their personal learning goals. This can only happen from a perspective on students which accommodates their variability and a program which offers each the option of obtaining support of the kind necessary to enable them to succeed.

LOCUS OF DECISION ABOUT STUDENT SUPPORT

Thus we return to two earlier themes. There is a sense in which all distance education provision is support for students. Even with some more limited notion of student support, if the discussion above is accepted, instruction and support activities would seem to overlap to the point where distinctions become superfluous, because genuine support will only be available if the teaching materials acknowledge the need to allow for individual response. This invokes the second theme, and that is such individualisation of materials is a teaching function. Thus, the appropriate locus of decision-taking about student support rests with the course team, or individual distance educator, for it is in this integration of support with the rest of the instructional process that distance teaching achieves the coherence and unity of purpose which any educational program should reflect and students have a right to expect.

It would be foolish to pretend there are not difficulties with this position.

First, there is very real disagreement, particularly in the tertiary sector, about the degree to which support is necessary. Many students receive materials which reflect none of the perspectives here. Some of our colleagues would deny that supporting students was a function of higher education. While part of our differences are simply those of language, it is the case that some academics would regard the suggestion that course materials allow for individuality of response as quite improper.

Second, there may seem to be a potential conflict between support provision and the developmental dimension of education which involves encouraging students towards autonomy and self-directed learning. Support initiatives must not convey the message that students are regarded as dependent upon the teaching staff. Nevertheless, those students who require support to achieve some progress towards their learning goals should be able to obtain it.

Third, there is the danger that much of what can from one perspective be seen as student support can from another be reasonably regarded as the institution looking after its own interests. For example, pre-enrolment counselling can be geared to help intending students explore the full range of options available to them and to make choices which most fully meet their needs. On the other hand, it can also be directed towards making sure that when completing enrolment forms, students avoid errors which cause delays in the administrative and record-keeping processes of the institution. Both are legitimate aims, but when most energy goes into support of the latter kind, the end result can actually be coercive for students.

Fourth, our position simply does not accord with much current practice. Distance-teaching institutions with impeccable credentials have support services operated quite separately from the teaching function. Our own External Studies Unit, which is primarily administrative, provides considerable support in the preparation of counselling advice, answering student queries concerning assignment traffic, assisting with difficulties over course materials, and acting as a go-between with lecturers. We believe it is necessary to acknowledge this reality and have sought to distinguish between student support of different kinds. The most common form is universal support, which is implemented by an institution on behalf of all its distance students regardless of their study course. It is largely administrative in nature and to a large extent also serves institutional ends. This form of support is <u>not</u> of particular concern in the present chapter.

Individual support is offered variously by teaching and administrative staff to all students, although not necessarily to the same extent. It is often course specific and is explicitly directed to meeting student needs. It is taken up only by those students who wish to do so. From our perspective, the greater part of student support should be of this kind and largely, if not entirely, the responsibility of the teaching staff.

Finally, our emphasis on support provision should not be construed as a discount of the initiatives students make to meet their own and other students' needs. As the Graduate Diploma in Distance Education is an inservice course for practitioners, to meet our own students' needs, our focus is frequently on the institutional and systemic perspective.

We use provision in the sense of an intentional response to perceived or potential student needs. This provision can be direct or indirect.

Direct support involves a representative of the program initiating some action or arrangement for one or more students which are supportive in nature, e.g. when tutors telephone individual students to ask about their progress and to offer assistance in resolving any difficulties the student might be experiencing. Indirect support occurs when the program facilitates support initiatives students engage in without the direct involvement of institutional representatives, e.g. the teaching organisation may circulate names and addresses of students so that those who wish to can contact each other.

Such problems notwithstanding, the course team considered it important that students should be challenged with the perspective presented here in the unit, Student Support Techniques in Distance Education. Further, this perspective should be reinforced both in the approach to teaching adopted and in the structure and content of the unit. The title was a product of discussions some three years earlier and something we committed ourselves to for the purposes of course accreditation. Now we were determined to encourage students to develop a critical perspective on student support before engaging in any way with the range of current provision. This would overcome, in part, the tendency we all share to be constrained in considering our options by the force of the status quo.

We based our teaching strategy on a highly individualised form of support used in another College course (see Comber 1983, pp.55-9) which we introduced in the following way in the unit:

> We want to explore a learning strategy with you which alters the relationship between us and makes it more collaborative and exploratory than before. Our aim is to enhance and support your involvement in the course, to reduce our own role as the providers and interpreters of information, and to remove any negative dimension to the interaction we as tutors have with you.

Some of the consequences of these expectations seemed to us to be:

1 we should accept that you will learn usefully if we relinquish considerable control over the content and learning experiences of the unit,

2 we should reduce the assessment component of our student-tutor interaction as much as possible within existing college policy, and

3 we should engage with you in a one-to-one collaborative exploration of your interests in this area to the greatest possible degree.

What we propose to do to act on these consequences is:

1 to provide stimulus material about relevant theory, research, and practice in the form of a collection of letters to you from members of the course team, supplemented with readings and audio-tape materials,

2 to ask you to establish areas of interest for yourself and write to us four letters during the term about what you are learning and other related matters,

3 to write back to you responding to what you have told us about, and

4 to make your participation in this correspondence the sole basis for determining assessment in the unit, which will take the form of a non-graded pass (NGP).

(South Australian College of Advanced Education, pp.6-7)

In developing the structure and determining the actual content of the materials included in the unit, we had to take a number of things into account. One matter which has concerned the course team since applications were first received for the program is the range of roles, sectors, and levels of distance education involvement our students represent. They work not only with adults but also with children as students in their various programs. Because of the complexity of their interests we took the decision that the unit should present a framework which accommodated all forms of student support. The assumptions which guided our thinking and the ultimate structure of the unit were:

- a theoretical framework which enabled critical appraisal of any form of student support would be more likely to meet our own students' need than a descriptive classification of existing forms of provision;

- particulars of current provision were less important for professional development than encouragement of respect for expressed student needs and the decision to be helpful in relation to those needs; and

- an appropriate starting point for developing this respect and commitment was the experience our students had in common of being distance learners within the Graduate Diploma course, from which they could move to an appreciation of student support in a wider context.

The first section of the course focuses on the individual learner and encourages our students to move from their own experience to a reflection on the assumptions they hold of other distance learners and the implications of these assumptions for their professional decision making.

The second section is concerned with the ways people learn. Because our students work with both children and adults, we were concerned at the implications for student support which might arise from the differences in theories regarding how children and adults learn. Certainly, if one accepts that children are more dependent, and adults independent, during the learning process, then there are clear consequences for developing appropriate support mechanisms. However, the experience of the course team began to throw doubt on this. It appears quite likely that one advantage of distance education for children is that they develop personal learning skills, and learn how to learn, when placed in a situation which encourages individualised learning. We moved to the view that our theory applied as much to children as to adults, i.e. their learning and experience had to be taken into account in the same way in the development of support provision.

The third section deals with the impact of institutional structures on student support. We were very conscious that while our theoretical perspective was leading us in one direction, there was no doubt that existing structures were a large determinant of provision in practice. This caused us to look at the relationship between institutional and individual needs as addressed in present forms of support and conclude that institutional needs were largely being met. Students were being treated as members of a university group, rather than individuals. Forms of universal support were generally prescriptive and procedural in orientation.

As indicated earlier, the theoretical position developed for the unit stressed the importance of the individual and the need to see the holistic nature of distance education programs. These were in no sense incompatible and could be achieved through establishing the responsibility for student support within the instructional process. This did not mean that there was no place for institutional provision of student support. What is of consequence is that the way students are directed to take advantage of institutional provision should arise from the individual dialogue they have with their course tutor.

The theoretical perspective was deliberately challenging. We found a unifying structure for many of the concerns raised in the unit in the theoretical construct of recurrent education (Centre for Continuing Education 1984). By committing oneself to a consideration of education as something not bound by particular constraints of time or stages in human experience, or tied to stereotyped products such as vocational entry, many of the traditional views of what students are, what their needs might be, and how these might appropriately be met, could be broken down.

Current strategies and techniques were dealt with in the form of a directory, which allowed us to condense an otherwise unmanageable number of services and concepts. The purpose was not to provide an exclusive list, but to exchange and disseminate information about existing services within a critical context. It was not a how-to-do-it manual. The Directory included entries such as : bookshops, communication technology-developing student skill, country outreach, disabled students, home video scheme, host schools, Isolated Children's Parents' Association, peer support, student unions, study centres and teleconferencing. There are twenty-eight entries in the first edition of the Directory. It is intended that the Directory be revised and updated yearly.

In addition to the Directory the Unit includes more detailed treatment of four core components of student support: counselling, study skills, tuition and library services. Both the Directory entries and these core components are presented to students within the critical perspective developed in the earlier sections of the unit.

The directory was supplemented by a survey of print support from distance-teaching institutions at all levels in Australia and New Zealand. This was organised according to typical stages of student involvement in

distance education programs, against which were plotted common forms of support provided and an analysis of the likely institutional and individual needs being addressed at each point. This enabled the highlighting of apparent disjunctions between the support provided and the likely needs of students. These disjunctions should become the focus of support initiatives and provide a base for innovative responses (see appendix 6.1). At the very least, they identify unmet needs and the inadequacies of current provision, which provides impetus towards support strategies which are planned to take account of actual student concerns rather that the application of conventional options.

Functions of study centres

The present discussion of study centres is interesting in this regard, not only because they are a major cost in support provision for those teaching institutions involved, but also because they have a mainly administrative support role to play which extends from pre-enrolment to graduation for many students.

From our analysis, study centres face difficulties whenever there are disjunctions between students' need for individual assistance and the common provision of some form of universal support, because such centres are largely the duplication of central systems geographically closer to some students. This is an oversimplification, but it is worth considering the criteria for an ideal study centre identified in Gough's report for the Tertiary Education Commission (1980), which are:

- the centre should be a cooperative undertaking, possibly between teaching institutions, students' organisations, and local authorities;
- it should be characterised by a high degree of visibility;
- there should be staff employed who are primarily responsible for the centre's operation and success;
- it should be financially supported by the institutions involved;
- it should have specified minimum accommodation; and
- it should cooperate in local functions with the city or shire.

None of these reflect emphases of the kind we have argued for. To be fair, many of the conditions outlined above are facilitatory in nature and very useful support services may be made possible by them. The institutional emphasis is nonetheless overwhelming.

It is not surprising that the single most important factor in determining the success of a study centre is the staff. Gough (p.35) comments:

> In some cases the question of how best to staff a study centre has received far less consideration than it warrants.... If however the nature of the staffing arrangements is vital to the success of a centre then it ought to become a primary rather than secondary consideration.'

In our view, the critical support which staff at a centre may be able to provide is that which is responsive to individual requests. Gough reports that there are great variations in the ability of centres to provide information and advice (p.33). This is understandable. If usefulness of information is a function of the familiarity of the provider with the practices and emphases of the institution concerned, then the limits on success are quite clear. Centre staff may well be versed in the administrative routines of the teaching body but familiarity with academic programs would be fortuitous at best and probably unlikely. If advice on administrative matters is, as we suspect, largely oriented to meeting institutional requirements, then the individual support offered by a centre is further diminished.

CAN CONVENTIONAL STUDY CENTRES PROVIDE TRUE STUDENT SUPPORT?

The discussion in this chapter should not be construed as an argument against centres, although we are uncertain that what success they do have in the provision of support might not be met equally well, and more cheaply, by exercising other options, e.g. support for study groups in private homes and regular regional visits by academic staff. Rather, we are concerned to ask how the potential support facility centres offer might be more directed to meeting individual needs. If , as we believe, individual support has to be planned and largely implemented together with and through the instructional process, then the function of the centre must be as much directed to feeding information back to the course teams and individual distance educators as it is to providing advice to students. Programs will be enhanced to the degree that the support provision they make is based on expressed student needs. Study centres can act both to generate and transmit student feedback.

We have put a view of student support which is responsive to individual student concerns and their particular learning contexts. Such support should be planned and incorporated into other elements of the distance education program to the point where tuition and support become virtually indistinguishable. Having established this view, it becomes possible to approach conventional support delivery from a critical perspective, in particular, looking for disjunctions between current provision and expressed student needs. By focusing on the disjunctions, the inappropriate nature of much current provision for individual students is highlighted. The problem faced by those responsible for study centres is how to redirect efforts from meeting institutional needs to supporting the improvement of teaching programs such that individual concerns are known and response made to them.

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Centre for Continuing Education (1984)
Recurrent Education for Australia: Statement of Intents
Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, [Canberra].

Comber, B. (1983)
'Writing back to writers: a tertiary experiment'
English in Australia,
no. 66, pp.55-9.

Gough, J.E. (1980)
Study Centres in Distance Education: Report to the Tertiary Education Commission on The Use of Study Centres in Four Distance Education Systems
Deakin University, Victoria.

South Australian College of Advanced Education (1985)
Student Support Techniques in Distance Education
Graduate Diploma in Distance Education Unit 7
South Australian College of Advanced Education, Adelaide.

Appendix 6.1 Disjunctions in support provision

Student support provision gives students clear messages regarding the way they are seen by the institution. Such provision, as the Directory shows, can range from pre-enrolment advice given over the telephone to the establishment of regional study centres. The institution and its representatives need to share a view of the students of that institution in order to provide consistency and genuine support to students.

One way of analysing existing provision is to consider what support is available at various phases of an individual's progress through a distance learning programme.

An individual's decision to undertake study at a distance involves that person in a journey which commonly has the following phases:

Phase 1: Pre-enrolment - deciding to study

Phase 2: Enrolment - making the decision

Phase 3: First despatch - making the commitment

Phase 4: Integration/getting through the programme

Phase 5: Withdrawal, or
Completion of study.

Phase 4 while clearly the longest phase has been dealt with previously in the section on Tuition and Counselling. Here we are more concerned with institutional provision.

The chart below is an attempt to illustrate these different phases in relation to the concerns of the institution and of the student. By juxtaposing these concerns with the typical support available it is possible to see some mismatchings which may occur. These mismatchings, or disjunctions, allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of that student support which is most typically provided and help us to make better decisions about the design and provision of student support.

Numbers in brackets are references which are documented on the page following the chart. These references may be used as a guide to some of the literature available on student needs and learning patterns. The chart is not meant to be definitive, but a tool to assist in understanding student support in distance learning systems.

Distance learning course	The institution's concerns	The student's concerns	Typical support provided	Some disjunctions
Pre-enrolment	. Procedural . Course promotion . Accurate information re course availability/ requirements . Student recruitment . Clarification of exceptions, credits, transfers . Delineating course design, choices, electives . Making offers, processing acceptances; distributing enrolment forms	. What course? Why? . General anxiety . Insecure, not yet committed, easily put off . Lacking self-confidence (1) . Occupation and family life major concerns, learning minor (2) . Specific anxieties: what will tutor/s think of me; how much time required; how will I rate with other students; will I be able to get resources? (4)	. Telephone enquiry staff . Information centre staff . Regional advice visits Publications: - guide for courses - handbook - introduction to external studies . Complex forms . Local study centres	. The institution's universal concerns opposing the individual's unique (mainly self-related) concerns . The sheer amount of accurate information regulations, possibilities vs the student's need to make individualised decisions
Enrolment	. Administration, accuracy of information . Regulations . Quotas . Drawing up despatch and class lists . Alerting teaching staff	. Weighing up the decision, future unknown . Uncertainty, waiting, wanting to begin	. Complex forms . Delays for processing . Impersonal communication . How to study	. Prescriptive information vs need to meet student's specific anxieties/ concerns. Impersonal bureaucracy. Response to major decision and uncertainty.
First despatch	. Accurate and timely despatch . Packaging the right material	. Eagerly awaited/ anticipation high . Arrival, reality hits, demand known (7) . Visual impact important . Organising study time . Making commitment or drops out (10)	. Learning materials . Introductory material	. Learning package defines the experience . Student commitment made now . Needs interaction/response
Integration/ getting through	. Student progress . Course profile/meeting requirements . Assessment . Attrition rates	. Recurrent choice points (9) . Harmonious equilibrium (home and study) or unsettled connection (5) . Developing study skills (11) . Occasional unforeseen problems, accident, illness, family crises, job change, etc. . Anxiety re assessment . Written interaction - learning how . Underestimation of time required . Lack of resources . Getting to know tutor . Academic challenge increases from early stages to later stages . Motivation wavers (3) . Content clarification . Guidance . How do I rate with other students?	. Tuition . Counselling . Student services . Local study centres . Library services . Residentials . Newsletters . Peer support group (6) . Telephone interaction	. Range of services provided yet can need for individual/ personal response and sense of belonging to a caring environment be met by these? . How are they related to instructional process, student's learning development? . Learning how to learn and developing sense of progress rarely addressed
Withdrawal	. Attrition rates (8) . Administrative follow up . Expense	. Loss of face . Sense of failure . Impact on future career/ return to study . Support for the reasons which may be related to: - study: lack of satisfaction/progress - personal crises - outside event - inability to cope - irrelevance of course choice . Personal goals have been achieved	Counselling	. If tutor is also counsellor student may not seek help . Regulations may not enable re-entry unless administration needs met . Tutor may counsel continuation because course interests are primary . Withdrawal often administered as a fail
Course completion	. Graduation details . Throughput	. Further study . Future career options . Recognition . Impact of change resulting from altered attitudes may affect family, relationships, occupation (5)	. Certification	. Impact of study on lifestyle not recognised

References for the chart, Disjunctions in support provision

1 Redmond, M. 'Aspects of adult learning'. Teaching at A Distance, no.8, 1975.

2 Heinze, T. 'The social and psychological mileau of distance students', Distance education, vol.4, no.1, 1983.

3 Delehanty & Miskiman, D. 'A package of shoelaces'. International Workshop on Counselling in Distance Education, Selected Papers, ICDE, Cambridge, 1983.

4 Moran, L. & Croker, S. 'Take counsel with yourself: a self-directed counselling package', Open Campus, no.7, 1981-82.

5 Kirk, P. 'The tip of the iceberg: some effects of Open University study in married students', 'Teaching at A Distance', no.10, 1977.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6 Smith, K.C. & Small, I.W. 'Student support: how much is enough'? Learning at a Distance, Athabasca University, ICDE, 1982.

7 Coltman, B. 'Environment and systems in distance counselling'. International Workshop on Counselling in Distance Education, Selected Papers, ICDE, Cambridge, 1983.

8 Woodley, A. & Parlett, M. 'Student dropout', Teaching at A Distance, no.24, 1983.

9 Daniel, J.S. & Marquis, C. 'Interactionn and independence: getting the mixute right' in Sewart, D. et al, Distance education: International Perspectives. Croom Helm, London, 1983.

10 Woodley, A. 'Why they declined the offer', Teaching at A Distance, no.23, 1983.

11 Gibbs, G. & Northedge, A. 'Learning to study: a student centred approach', Teaching at A Distance, no.8, 1975.

You may wish to add to this table with examples from your own experience. Of course, no situtation is as black and white as this table suggests. However, by considering provision in this way it is possible to view existing, long accepted practieces in a new light.

From an examination of this table it is easy to see the disparity which occurs at each phase. The procedural concern of the institution and the personal concerns of the individual are at odds with each other. The kinds of support which are typically available more often reflect the needs of the institution without meeting the needs of the individual. There appear to be serious gaps in provision particularly at the withdrawal and completion phases. This is not to doubt the intention of the provision of student support, which in many cases is an attempt to put a human face to the well-oiled education machine. It does, however, raise concerns as to whether we have developed support processes which are sufficiently innnovative in relation to the individual. The obvious need to increase interactive opportunities at all phases in order to address students' personal concerns raises the inevitable question of cost.

Source: South Australian College of Advanced Education, Student Support Techniques in Distance Education Graduate Diploma in Distance Education Unit 7, pp.208-11.

A selective bibliography on study centres and their functions, and on applications of new technology in student support

Keith Harry

INTRODUCTION

The following bibliography has been compiled entirely from materials held in the document collection of the International Centre for Distance Learning of the United Nations University based at the Open University in the United Kingdom. The aim of the International Centre is to maintain a comprehensive collection of literature in English on distance education and a good collection in other languages. This is an extremely difficult task even to attempt; details of additional books, papers, reports and articles (whether published, semi-published, or unpublished) on the subject of this bibliography would be very welcome and should be addressed to the author at the International Centre for Distance Learning, c/o The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK.

The term 'selective bibliography' in this context needs explanation. This bibliography is selective in several different ways. First, it is drawn from the resources of one particular collection which aims at, but cannot expect to achieve, comprehensiveness even in literature in English. Second, only English-language documents are included in this bibliography. What, then, is excluded? The Fernuniversität in West Germany has probably produced more papers relevant to this bibliography than any other institution teaching in a language other than English. The vast majority of these papers are in German, but a small proportion are produced in English, and some of these papers are included in this bibliography. Relevant materials produced in the Spanish Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia and in the many distance-teaching institutions in the Spanish-speaking countries of South and Central America are invariably in Spanish. The number of documents in languages other than English, German and Spanish relating to study centres and their functions and to the application of new technologies in these areas is minimal.

A third aspect of selectivity is directly related to the volume of extant literature on particular topics and is best explained in conjunction with an account of the structure of the bibliography. The structure is as follows:

1 Student support

2 Study centres
2.1 Tutoring and counselling
2.2 Library services

3 Use of new technology in student support
3.1 Computer technology
3.2 Satellites
3.3 Telephone technology

Section 1 (student support) is a broad section. It contains references to collections of papers, journals and individual works which provide additional material over and above what is listed in subsequent sections of the bibliography. Throughout the bibliography I have also noted substantial bibliographies and reading lists appended to individual books, papers, etc.

Section 2 (study centres) is relatively small since little has been written at a general level on this topic. On the other hand, individual functions of study centres, notably tutoring and counselling, have a very substantial literature. I have combined tutoring and counselling in one sub-section since many works deal with both functions together. This sub-section represents only a small fraction of the total available literature. Selection in this situation is very much a subjective process; this is an important reason for the inclusion of further sources of reference in sections 1 and 2. The only other study centre function with some literature is library services (sub-section 2.2). Other functions tend not to be written about individually.

Section 3 (use of new technology in student support) also includes details of additional sources of reference. The three sub-sections (computer technology, satellites, and telephone technology) represent the principal new technologies (developing rather than new in the case of the telephone) which are used and will be increasingly used in providing student support. These are mentioned in this book but which I hope will be discussed more fully in the second book planned for the Deakin series. The literature of each technology tends to reflect developments in particular countries and institutions. For example, a large proportion of the literature on computer technology comes from the Open University in the United Kingdom; a great deal of literature on satellites, their present and potential use in distance education, is being produced in Australia; and literature on telephone technology emanates principally from the United Kingdom and the United States, in the latter case particularly from one institution, the University of Wisconsin-Extension. I have tried in the bibliography to indicate these trends without allowing the literature of any one institution or country to dominate any one sub-section.

1 STUDENT SUPPORT

The topics about how students learn and the difficulties they encounter in distance learning are not dealt with in this bibliography. Some references on these topics can be found in K. Harry (ed) (1984) Distance Education in Western Europe: A Selective Annotated Bibliography of Current Literature, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin, section 10: 'Student support'.

Conference proceedings and volumes of conference papers are valuable sources of information on student support. Some individual papers from the following publications are included in this bibliography:

Crump, P. & Livingston, K. (eds) (1981)
ASPESA Forum '81 papers. Theme: Dimensions of Difference. Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association, Fifth Biennial Forum, Suva,
University of the South Pacific, Suva.

Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association (1983)
Challenges Facing Distance Education. Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association, 6th Biennial Forum, Toowoomba, 11-15 July. Collected Papers
Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Toowoomba.
3 vols.

Taylor, J.C., Timmins, J.A. & White, V.J. (eds) (1984)
Challenges Facing Distance Education: Proceedings of the Sixth Biennial Forum of the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, 11th-15th July 1983
Darling Downs Institute Press, Toowoomba.
The published book of proceedings contains edited extracts from papers presented at the forum.

Daniel, J.S., Stroud, M.A. & Thompson, J.R. (eds) (1982)
Learning at A Distance: A World Perspective
Athabasca University/International Council for Correspondence Education, Edmonton. (Prepared for the 1982 Twelfth World Conference of the ICCE.)

Another publication which is a useful source of information is K. Smith (ed) (1984) Diversity Down Under in Distance Education, Darling Downs Institute Press, Toowoomba. Collection of papers by members of the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association. The general articles with historical and philosophical orientation are followed by nine vignettes describing distance education in the various states of Australia, and in Fiji, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Journals which regularly contain articles on student support in distance education include:

Distance Education, published bi-annually by the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association, the principal scholarly journal devoted to distance education.

Teaching at A Distance, published by the Open University in the United Kingdom in the past several times per year, but only one issue appeared in 1984 and one is scheduled for 1985. A selection of articles from this journal are included in the bibliography; many more could have been included.

International Council for Distance Eduction (ICDE) Bulletin, published three times per year from the North West Regional Office of the Open University. Contains a wide variety of articles and news items.

Open Campus, published occasionally (about twice a year) by the Distance Education Unit of Deakin University, good source for Australian papers and, like Teaching at A Distance, it also includes material from other countries.

Epistolodidaktika, published bi-annually by the Assocication of the European Correspondence Schools, often includes papers from AECS (formerly European Home Study Council) workshops.

The following papers discuss the role of student support in a distance-learning system:

Daniel, J.S. & Marquis, C. (1977)
'Interaction and independence: getting the mixture right'
Teaching at A Distance
no.14, pp.29-44.

Sewart, D. (1981)
'Distance teaching: a contradiction in terms?'
Teaching at A Distance, no.19, pp.8-18.

The Sewart paper and the Daniel & Marquis paper are reprinted in D. Sewart, D. Keegan and B. Holmberg (eds) (1983), Distance Education: International Perspectives, Croom Helm, London, pp.339-59 and 46-61 respectively.

The problems and resultant needs of distance students, some ways of meeting these needs, and some problems encountered in providing support for student learning are examined in B. Robinson, 'Support for student learning', in A. Kaye and G. Rumble (eds) (1981), Distance Teaching for Higher Adult Education, Croom Helm, London, pp.141-61.

During the 1970s a series of reports were produced by the University of Lund, Department of Education, as part of a study of two-way communication in distance education. These reports are the subject of a review article by P. Northcott et al. (1981), 'Pedagogical reports: the Lund studies in correspondence education', Distance Education, vol.2, no.1, 1981, pp.110-23.

The Council for Educational Technology for the United Kingdom is publishing a series of guides for people newly involved in creating open and distance learning materials and courses. The volume concerned with student support is R. Lewis (1984) How to Tutor and Support Learners, CET, London, (Open learning guide 3). The book looks at supporting the learner, i.e. what kinds of support are needed and when; tutoring; and how to choose, train and monitor tutors.

The following is a selection of papers and articles describing student support provision in particular countries and institutions:

Deakin University (Australia)

King, B., Sewart, D, & Gough, J.E. (1980)
'Support systems in distance education'
Open Campus
no. 6, pp.13-28.
Concerned with experience in Australia and the United Kingdom.

University of New England (Australia)

Smith, K.C. & Small, I.W. (1982)
'Student support: how much is enough'
In J.S. Daniel, M.A. Stroud and J.R. Thompson (eds)
Learning at a Distance: A World Perspective
pp.137-9.
Describes development of UNE contact project, a graduate advisory network.

Bowlay, D. & Small, I. (1983)
'Decentralising external student support services - UNE contact - a feasible low-cost approach'
In Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association
Challenges Facing Distance Education
vol. 2, pp.455-74.

Télé-université (Canada)

Caron, S. (1982)
'Student support at a crossroad',
In J.S. Daniel, M.A. Stroud and J.R. Thompson (eds)
Learning at a Distance: A World Perspective
pp.145-8.
Describes student support at the Télé-université in relation to a student survey.

Sweden

Willén, B. (1984)
Strategies for Strengthening Student-Teacher Contact in Distance Education: Results of An Evaluation of Distance Education in Swedish Universities.
Open University Distance Education Research Group, Milton Keynes.
(DERG papers, 9)

Open University (United Kingdom)

Gagan, M. (1984)
'Student support: whose responsibility?'
Teaching at A Distance
no.25, pp.12-16.
Questions the effectiveness of post-foundation level student support.

Keegan D.J. (1981)
The Regional Tutorial Services of The Open University: A Case Study
Fernuniversität Zentrales Institut für Fernstudienforschung, Hagen.
(ZIFF papiere 36)
Critique of regional provision, particularly of the work of the central administrative Regional Tutorial Services division.

Sewart, D. (1978)
Continuity of Concern for Students in A System of Learning at A Distance.
Fernuniversität Zentrales Institut für Fernstudienforschung, Hagen.
(ZIFF papiere 22)
Examines development of regional services from the beginning of the University.

Fernuniversität (West Germany)

Keegan, D. (1982)
Student Support Services and Drop-outs at the Fernuniversität
Fernuniversität Zentrales Institut für Fernstudienforschung, Hagen.
Critical review of Fernuniversität student services.

Millard, J. (1982)
'Supporting students in the Fernuniverität'
Teaching at A Distance,
no.22, pp.4-9.
Critical survey of balance between regional and central elements in Fernuniversität, focusing on one cooperating region.

2 STUDY CENTRES

Deakin University (Australia)

Gough, E.J. (1980a)
Study Centres in Distance Education. Report to the Tertiary Education Committee on the Use of Study Centres in Four Distance Education Systems
Deakin University, Geelong.
Detailed examination of facilities in, and use made of, a variety of study centres. Also reviews study centre provision in other countries, develops a study centre model and discusses ways in which it could be put into effect.

Gough, E.J. (1980b)
The Use of Study Centres in Four Distance Education Systems
Deakin University, Geelong.
A condensed version of the full report.

Open Learning Institute (Canada)

Heakin, D. (1982)
'The role of regional centres'
In J.S. Daniel, M.A. Stroud and J.R. Thompson (eds)
Learning at A Distance: A World Perspective
pp.157-9.

North Island College (Canada)

Slater, D. (1982)
'Mobile learning centres in an open learning system'
In J.S. Daniel, M.A. Stroud and J.R. Thompson (eds)
Learning at A Distance: A World Perspective
pp.154-6.

Open University (United Kingdom)

Teaching at A Distance
no.16, 1979.
This issue contains two articles on study centres by, respectively, a regional Director and a part-time staff member who had worked in various tutorial and counselling roles for the Open University. The articles are: M. Bradford, 'Study centres: the background to the current policy review', pp.33-6, and P. Kirk, 'Study centres: some impressions', pp.36-41.

2.1 TUTORING AND COUNSELLING

The literature on counselling in distance education was reviewed in R. Thornton and I. Mitchell (1978) Counselling The Distance Learner: A Survey of Trends and Literature, University of Adelaide, Adelaide. A bibliography of around 150 documents, mostly emanating from Australia, the UK and the USA, is included.

A publication containing two useful sources of reference on counselling, as well as a selection of descriptions of counselling in several countries, is A. Tait and D. Sewart (eds) (1984) International Workshop on Counselling in Distance Education, September 20th-22nd 1983, Downing College, Cambridge. Selected papers, Open University Regional Academic Services/International Council for Distance Education, Cambridge. The first source is P. Kelly and R. Mills, 'Evaluating counselling in distance learning: the Open University experience', pp.61-4, which has a 'Select bibliography of key papers and research studies' appended. The second source is M.E. Moore, 'Selected and abstracted articles on counselling in Teaching at A Distance 1975-1983', pp.65-85. A list of the selected articles also appears in Moore's article 'Counselling in Teaching at A Distance, Teaching at A Distance, no.25, 1984, pp.87-91.

A publication dealing with tutoring, among other aspects of student support, R. Lewis (1984) How to Tutor and Support Learners, which has been referred to above in Section 1. The same author in 1981 published How To Tutor in An Open-Learning Scheme, Council for Educational Technology, London. This work is available in two parallel versions, one for self-study and one for group study. Although originally aimed at colleges of further education and colleges of technology in the United Kingdom, the 1981 guides have much wider relevance.

Deakin University (Australia)

The Deakin University publication Open Campus has included a number of papers on tutoring and counselling. Issue no.2, 1979, is almost entirely devoted to counselling issues. Papers include J.E. Gough, 'Distance education, mature age, open entry and counselling', pp.7-14, and J.E. Gough & B. Coltman, 'Counselling the distance student: fact or fiction', pp.39-47.

Athabasca University (Canada)

Cochran, B. Roed & Meech, A. (1981)
'Training telephone tutors'
In Daniel, J.S., Stroud, M.A. & Thompson, J.R. (eds)
Learning at A Distance: A World Perspective
pp.143-5.

North Island College (Canada)

Mithen, L.S. (1983)
'The role of the professional tutor in developing efficient distance learning systems'
In Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association
Challenges Facing Distance Education
vol. 2, pp.489-98.

Norway

Rekkedal, T. (1985)
Introducing The Personal Tutor/Counsellor in The System of Distance Education. Project Report 2: Final Report.
NKI-skolen, Stabekk.
Experimental project on different ways of organising tutoring and counselling support activities in a private distance teaching institution.

United Kingdom

Gibbs, G. (1981)
'Training tutors at a distance: an alternative strategy'
Teaching at A Distance
no. 20, pp.42-8.
Describes a development in retraining conventional teachers in further and higher education for distance teaching.

National Extension College (United Kingdom)

Freeman, R. (1982)
'Flexistudy'
In J.S. Daniel, M.A. Stroud and J.R. Thompson (eds)
Learning at A Distance: A World Perspective
pp.162-5.
Describes a system widely adopted by UK colleges, using printed material centrally produced by the NEC, together with local tutorial support.

Lewis, R. (1980)
Counselling in Open Learning: A Case Study.
(NEC reports, series 2, no.6).
Describes the NEC Leeds Counselling Project, which investigated the needs of adult correspondence students outside the Open University.

Lewis, R. 'The role of the correspondence tutor'
In J.S. Daniel, M.A. Stroud & J.R. Thompson (eds)
Learning at A Distance: A World Perspective
pp.135-6.

Open University (United Kingdom)

The Open University has published Teaching for The Open University, an introduction to its teaching system for new part-time tutorial and counselling staff. The second edition appeared in 1982. It contains a chapter entitled 'Ideas for further reading'.

The following titles represent a very small fraction of the works which hve been produced about the University's tuition and counselling provision. Extensive research is undertaken in the Institute of Educational Technology and in Regional Academic Services.

Hawkridge, D. (1979)
Seven Years of Tuition and Counselling Research at The Open University
Fernuniversität Zentrales Institut für Fernstudienforschung, Hagen.
(ZIFF Papiere 25)

Kelly, P. & Swift, B. (1983)
'Post-foundation tuition: student perspectives'
Teaching at A Distance
no.24, pp.35-41.

Kelly, P. & Ryan, S. (1983)
'Using tutor tapes to support the distance learner'
International Council of Distance Education Bulletin
vol. 3, pp.19-23.

Murgatroyd, S. (1980)
'What actually happens in tutorials?'
Teaching at A Distance
no. 18, pp.44-53.
Report on an analysis of interactions between tutor and students at thirty tape-recorded tutorial sessions.

Sewart, D. (1980)
'Creating an information base for an individualised support system in distance education'
Distance Education
vol. 1, no. 2., pp.171-87.
Describes the creation of a general data-management and file-processing system which enables tutor and counsellors to be assisted in their support of individual students.

Empire State College (United States)

Coughlan, R. (1980)
'The mentor role in individualized education at Empire State College'
Distance Education
vol. 1, no. 1, pp.1-12.

Fernuniversität (West Germany)

Brandes, U. & Raters, E. (1984)
'Counselling and tuition of first-year distance students in study centres'
In A. Tait and D. Sewart (eds)
International Workshop on Counselling in Distance Education ...
pp.34-9.
The study centres in question are both outside Northrhine-Westphalia, where the Fernuniversität is based.

Fritsch, H. (1982)
'Industrialized counselling'
In J.S. Daniel, M.A. Stroud & J.R. Thompson (eds)
Learning at A Distance: A World Perspective
pp.140-1.

2.2 LIBRARY SERVICES

Australia

Crocker, C. (ed) (1982)
Guidelines for Library Services to External Students.
Prepared by a sub-committee of the Special Interest Group on Distance Education. Library Association of Australia, Ultimo, NSW.
Sets out minimum level of provision for library services to students enrolled in the external mode with any post-secondary institution in Australia.

Crocker, C. (ed) (1982)
Library Services in Distance Education: Proceedings of a National Workshop, Brisbane, June 1981.
Library Association of Australian Special Interest Group on Distance Education, [Ultimo, NSW].
Collection of papers concerned with problems relating to provision of library services to external students in Australia and overseas.

Winter, A. & Cameron, M. (1983)
External Students and Their Libraries: An Investigation into Student Needs for Reference Material, The Sources They Use and The Effects of The External System within Which They Study.
Deakin University, Geelong.
Report of a survey of the use of library material by external students in ten Australian universities and colleges. A brief account by A. Winter, 'Off-campus students: their needs for reference material and the influence of the off-campus system in which they study', appears in Open Campus, no.9, 1984, pp.96-107.

A number of studies of external students and library services in individual institutions have also been produced. An example is J.R. Brockman & J.E. Klobas (1982), Libraries and Books in Distance Education, Perth, Western Australian Institute of Technology Library.

United Kingdom

Tomlinson, K.R. (1984)
'Media resource centres',
In A.W. Bates (ed)
The Role of Technology in Distance Education,
Croom Helm, London, pp.195-203.
Considers the functions of study centres in relation to library provision.

Open University (United Kingdom)

Dale, S. (1982)
'The three L's - libraries, literature and learning'
Teaching at A Distance
no. 22, pp.72-6.
Describes the Open University library-related provision to students, with emphasis on provision by the University Library.

Gains, D. (1983)
'The Open University, continuing education and adults learning: notes toward the definition of a role for library services'
Education Libraries Bulletin
vol. 26, pt. 1, pp.14-27.
Describes at greater length than Dale a number of surveys relating to students and libraries, and the University's response, particularly in the University's regions.

3 USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY IN STUDENT SUPPORT

A useful bibliographical source is P.B. White (ed) (1983), Satellites, Telecommunications and Education: A Resource Guide for Australian Educators, Commonwealth/State Advisory Committee on the Educational Use of Communications Technology, Woden. This is an annotated bibliography containing over 200 items. It is being revised for 1985/86.

The following three works produced in the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada respectively, present general accounts of currently available media and their present and possible future applications in distance education:

Bates, A.W. (ed) (1984)
The Role of Technology in Distance Education
Croom Helm, London.
A chapter of particular relevance here is R. Dallos, 'Tutors and media', pp.185-93.

Gough, J.E., Garner, B.J. & Day, R.K. (eds) (1981)
Education for The Eighties: The Impact of The New Communications Technology.
Deakin University, Geelong.
This contains twenty-three papers on the access, experience, sociological and policy issues connected with communications technology.

Ruggles, R. et al. (1982)
Learning at A Distance and The New Technology
Educational Research Institute of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Australia

The Commonwealth/State Advisory Committee on the Educational Use of Communications Technology has funded a dozen trial projects throughout Australia and has also produced a number of publications relevant to this bibliography. The White resource guide is referred to above; details are included in Section 3.2 of publications relating to the Australian communications satellite system.

A concise account of the development of new technology in Australia is J.E. Gough, 'Distance education and educational technology: an Australian perspective', in C.W. Osborne (ed) (1984). International Yearbook of Educational and Instructional Technology 1984/85, Kogan Page, London. pp.17-27.

Issue no. 10, 1985, of Open Campus is devoted to communications technology. Of particular interest in terms of a general overview are two papers; R. Banks, 'Information, telecommunications and distance education', pp.5-21, which compares developments in Telecom Australia with those in other countries and explains how new developments can increase effectiveness and efficiency of distance education; and Nguyen Tran & P.H. Northcott, 'Telecommunications network for distance education', pp.46-55.

Canada

A 1984 TV Ontario publication in 17 parts entitled New Technologies in Canadian Education includes a paper (no.5) entitled Communications and Information Technologies and Distance Education in Canada by E.J. Burge, J. Wilson & A. Mehler. References to other papers in the series appear in sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

Another general account of recent developments is C.R. Shobe, 'Telecommunications technologies and distance education: a report on recent Canadian initiatives', Open Campus, no.8, 1983, pp.5-21.

United Kingdom

Many examples used in A.W. Bates (ed) (1984), The Role of Technology in Distance Education, are drawn from the United Kingdom and in particular from the Open University.

United States

Zigerell, J. (1984)
Distance Education: An Information Age Approach to Adult Education.
Columbus, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Careers and Vocational Education.
Not confined to new technology, but does attempt some generalisations on this area of the complex US scene.
A useful source of updating information is the journal Telescan, published in Washington, D.C., by the Center for Learning and Telecommunications of the Americal Association for Higher Education.

3.1 COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

Several chapters from A.W. Bates (ed) (1984), The Role of Technology in Distance Education, cover developments in particular aspects of computer technology. These include: P. Bacsich, 'Viewdata systems', pp.173-84; A. Jones, 'Computer assisted learning', pp.77-88; and P. Zorkoczy, 'Teletext systems', pp.165-72.

Other general works include:

Davie, L. & Palmer, P. (1984)
'Computer-teleconferencing for advanced distance education'
Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education
vol. X, no. 2, pp.56-66.
Discusses and surveys the literature of computer conferencing and the characteristics of both the technical system and the learning system.

European Home Study Council (1984)
Finn Spring Workshop 1984...Helsinki... Theme: Microcomputers In Distance Education.
[Conference papers]
Markkinointi Instituutti, Helsinki.
The principal papers are reprinted in Epistolodidaktika, 1984, 1 & 2. One such paper is T. O'Shea, 'Computer-assisted learning in distance education', pp.44-57, a brief review of current and potential use of computer-assisted learning in distance education, with many examples taken from the work of the Open University.

Jones, A., Scanlon, E. and O'Shea, T.
The Computer Revolution in Education: New Technologies for Distance Teaching.
Harvester Press, Brighton.
(In press)

Kaufman, D. (1984)
'A computer-based instructional system for distance education'
Computers and Education
vol. 8, no. 4, pp.479-84.
Argues for the emergence of computer-based distance education systems.

Deakin University (Australia)

Pearson, R. (1985)
'Deakin University's Graduate Diploma of Computing'
Open Campus
no. 10, pp.41-5.
Description of the course, including the student's use of a home computer linked to a telephone for quick interaction with the tutor in the form of electronic mail and assignment dispatches.

Canada

Wilson, J. (1984)
Educational Applications of Videotex/Telidon in Canada
(TVOntario New technologies in Canadian Education paper 11)

United Kingdom

Sabberton, S. (1984)
UK Information Systems: Their Relevance for The Open Tech Programme.
Manpower Services Commission Open Tech Unit, Sheffield.
(Open Tech occasional papers, 4)
Brief report surveying printed sources, electronic publishing and computerised information systems.

Open University (United Kingdom)

Bacsich, P. (1985)
'Teleconferencing for distance education and training: is the Open University experience typical?'
Bulletin de l'IDATE
no. 19, pp.206-16.
Surveys various teleconferencing trials in the Open University, and attempts to analyse their relative lack of success.

Bates, A.W. (1984)
The Implications for Teaching and Learning of New Informatics Developments
Open University, Milton Keynes.
(Papers on Information technology, no.233)

McConnell, D. & Sharples, M. (1983)
'Distance teaching by Cyclops: an educational evaluation of the Open University's telewriting system'
British Journal of Educational Technology
vol.14, no.2, pp.109-26.
Explains how Cyclops, a system enabling live transmission of writing and drawing by telephone, has been used to tutor students in the Open University East Midlands region. McConnell also has a chapter on Cyclops in A.W. Bates (ed) (1984), The Role of Technology in Distance Education, pp.139-54.

Scanlon, E. et al. (1982)
'Computer assisted learning'
Teaching at A Distance Institutional Research Review,
no.1, Spring 1982, pp.59-80.
Summarises the findings of a number of evaluation studies into the use of CAL at the Open University.

The Computer Assisted Learning Research Group at the Open University has produced more than 40 reports. In common with the publications of all the other former Institute of Educational Technology-based research groups, these reports are now available through IET's Information and Intelligence Centre.

Fernuniversität (West Germany)

Küffner, H. (1984)
'Computer-assisted applications in distance teaching and evaluation'
Distance Education,
vol.5, no.1, pp.38-49.
Describes a range of applications in the Fernuniversität including student support.

3.2 SATELLITES

An invaluable source of information on progress with satellite programmes is Uplink, the newsletter of the US Agency for International Development Rural Satellite Program, published at the Academy for Educational Development, Washington, D.C. A number of localised newsletters also appear, such as ASPESA Telesignal, newsletter of the ASPESA Telecommunications Special Interest Group.

Australia

The impending availability of the Australian domestic satellite AUSSAT has stimulated the production of a variety of publications. The Commonwealth/State Advisory Committee on the Educational Use of Communications Technology in 1984 produced a report entitled Educational Use of The Australian Communications Satellite System: Discussion Paper. The purpose of the report 'is to assemble information and views which might contribute to reviewing where education stands in relation to the domestic satellite and to considering what further action needs to be taken to ensure that education makes appropriate use of the new system'. The following two reports were published by the Committee prior to the issue of the discussion paper:

Davies, N.G. & Gillam, J.A. (1983)
Potential Use of The Australian Communications Satellite System for School of The Air and Enhanced Educational Services.

Kitt, J., Davies, N.G. & Gillam, J.A. (1983)
School of The Air by Satellite: A Study of The Improvement of Distance Education in North-West Queensland Using the Australian Communicating Satellite System.

A succinct account of existing use of satellite facilities in Australia is provided in K.T. Livingston, 'Satellite communications and teleducation in Australia', International Council of Distance Education Bulletin, vol. 6, September 1984, pp.54-7.

The Distance Education Unit of Deakin University is publishing in August 1985 a book about the networking efforts of the Australian tertiary education sector on the eve of the launching of AUSSAT, Australia's own domestic satellite. A.S. Castro, P.A. Juler, & P.J. Smith (ed) (1985), Telecommunications Networking in Education: Proceedings of A Convention Sponsored by The Deakin-Gordon Projects and Held at Deakin University 15 February 1985.

Canada

An overview of Canadian satellite use is J.H. Richmond (1984), Educational applications of communications satellites in Canada, (TVOntario New technologies in Canadian education, paper 12)

University of Victoria (Canada)

Haughey, M. (1982)
'Teaching and learning via interactive satellite: a Janus view'
In Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association
Challenges Facing Distance Education
vol. 2, pp.443-53.
Describes University of Victoria experiences with Canadian Hermes and ANIK-B satellites.

University of the South Pacific (Fiji)

Williams, A.I. (1984)
'Distance education and the University of the South Pacific: problems, challenges and opportunities'
In C.W. Osborne (ed)
International Yearbook of Educational and Instructional Technology 1984/85,
Kogan Page, London, pp.45-53.
Describes present distance learning facilities available to students, including use of satellite communication for tutoring and teleconferencing, and likely future developments.

Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (India)

Agrawal, B.C. (1981)
SITE Social Evaluation: Results, Experiences and Implications
Space Application Centre, Ahmedabad.

Open University (United Kingdom)

Bacsich, P. et al. (1983)
The Implications for The Open University of Recent Cable and Satellite Developments: A Discussion Paper
Open University Institute of Educational Technology, Milton Keynes.
(Paper on information technology, no.213)

University of the West Indies (West Indies)

University of the West Indies (1983)
University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE).
UWI, Kingston.
Description of the development of satellite tutorial and teleconferencing activities.

3.3 TELEPHONE TECHNOLOGY

A brief general survey of the applications of telephone technology in distance education is B. Robinson (1984), 'Telephone teaching', In A.W. Bates (ed), The Role of Technology in Distance Education, pp.121-37. There is an extensive bibliography.

Harris, N.D.C. & Tarrant, R.D. (1983)
'Teleconferencing and distance learning'
British Journal of Educational Technology
vol.14, no.2, pp.103-08.
Possible uses of teleconferencing are examined with case studies chosen from the United Kingdom and the United States. Also includes information on costing, preparation and organisation.

Deakin University (Australia)

Open Campus, no.9, 1984, contains two articles by J.R. Grimwade, 'A teletutorial trial at Deakin University', pp.26-44, and 'Issues in teletutoring', pp.45-62. The first article is an account of the trial use of audio teleconferencing in Deakin's Master of Business Administration program; the second examines issues concerning hardware, teletutorial planning, teaching techniques, etc.

Open Campus, no.10, 1985, includes R. Ensley, 'Teletutorials: a distance tutor's view', pp.23-5, expressing support and offering suggestions for improvements.

Murdoch University (Australia)

Potter, G. (1983)
'The potential use of the telephone as an instructional device in external studies'
Distance Education
vol. 4, no. 1, pp.95-107.
Describes an investigation into the possible incorporation of the telephone into external studies at Murdoch University.

Canada

Burge, E.J., Roberts, J.M. & Waldron, M.W. (1984)
'Audio-teleconferencing in continuing education: a case study with implications'
Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education
vol. X, no. 2, pp.20-30.
Description of workshop held in Canada in 1984 by the Canadian Association for Distance Education, together with brief literature review on audio-teleconferencing. The proceedings of the same workshop have been published as E.J. Burge (ed) (1984) Distance Learning: Process and Materials Design, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto.

Graham, M. (1984)
Educational Teleconferencing in Canada
(TVOntario New technologies in Canadian education, paper 14)

Open University (United Kingdom)

Open University (1982)
Tutoring by Telephone: A Handbook
A practical guide for Open University part-time staff. Contains a select bibliography not confined to material relating to the Open University.

George, J. (1983)
On the line: counselling and teaching by telephone
Open University Centre for Continuing Education.
A pack comprising a printed text, a set of worksheets, and an audio cassette, 'designed to provide resource material for training programmes which aim at adapting the skills of face-to-face communication to communication by telephone'. Includes list of 'further reading'.

University of Wisconsin-Extension (United States)

Olgren, C.H. & Parker, L.A. (1983)
Teleconferencing Technology and Applications
Artech House Inc., Dedham, Maryland.
One of the many publications produced by staff of University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Reid, F.J.M. & Champness, B.G. (1983)
'Wisconsin Educational Telephone Network: how to run educational teleconferencing successfully'
British Journal of Educational Technology
vol. 14, no. 2, pp.85-102.
Summarises data on the Network and attempts to identify principal reasons for its success. The reference list provides a useful short bibliography of University of Wisconsin-Extension publications on teleconferencing.

The contributors

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David Edge left a career in industry to join Deakin University ten years ago. He is now Assistant Registrar with special responsibility for the Off-Campus Operations Unit. In 1982 he obtained his Master's degree in Educational Administration from the University of New England with a thesis on attrition of Deakin external students. He has continued his research in this area but is also interested in student support systems in distance eduction. Contact: Deakin University, Victoria 3217, Australia. Tel. 052-471111.

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